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The Atlantic

VIETNAM'S VIETNAM / NAT HENTOFF ON THE AWFUL PRIVACY OF BABY DOE

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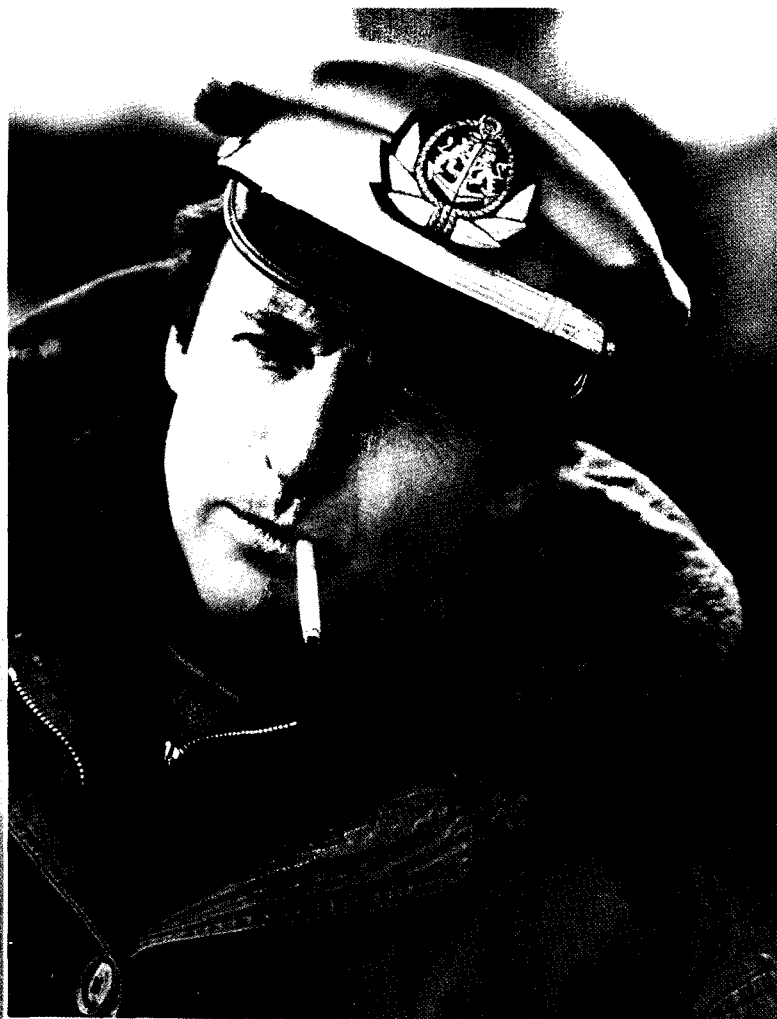
BY DAVID DENBY



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Editorial and Business Office

8 Arlington Street / Boston, Mass. 02116

Advertising Office

420 Lexington Avenue / New York, N.Y. 10170

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NUCLEAR WINTER

Thomas Powers's article ("Nuclear Winter and Nuclear Strategy") in the November issue of *The Atlantic* would scare anybody out of five years' growth. However, his conclusion that the nuclear-winter problem "seems a piece of immense good fortune at the eleventh hour" would appear to ignore historical precedent insofar as war in general is concerned.

There have always been logical arguments against going to war. Yet we know that wars have taken place. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the arguments were made in Europe that "war would be too disruptive of trade to even be considered by intelligent people." Short, local wars were one thing. But major Continental war could not happen. What happened in 1914?

During the interwar period some argued that another full-scale world war would be fought until our conventional industrial societies collapsed completely. H. G. Wells's *The Shape of Things to Come* was a popular fictional example of this type of thinking. Yet our world wasn't destroyed by the Second World War, although a person then living in Nagasaki, Dresden, or the western Ukraine might have said otherwise.

Nuclear winter is just another good argument against atomic war, along with flash burns, radiation poisoning, plague, the breakdown of law and order, starvation, genetic mutations, and all the others we haven't even thought of. The nuclear war will take place, because, just as in 1914, 1939, and all the times before and since, someone in power will be convinced that the war can be won.

PHIL FITCH
Paris, Tenn.

Thomas Powers's article on nuclear winter is an excellent treatment of the subject, and will, one hopes, increase public awareness of a global scenario that truly makes nuclear weapons an anachronism.

I would like to add that the Soviets confirm the general findings of the TTAPS report, not only in their popular press but also in responsible scientific journals. An example of this is a lengthy article early this year by V. V. Aleksan-

drov and G. L. Stenchikov, in an applied-physics journal published by the Soviet Academy of Sciences, which describes their own computer model based on Turco's hypothesis. This study supports the conclusion that multiple climatological disasters would occur in the Northern Hemisphere as the result of even a minimal level of nuclear detonations.

In addition to demonstrating the blackout effects from dust and ash, the Soviet model shows that atmospheric temperature inversion could raise the air temperatures over major mountain ranges by as much as 20 degrees, causing snowpack-melting and flooding on a continental scale. These authors also point out that the oceans, with their considerable thermal inertia, would not cool as rapidly as land masses; from the resulting air-temperature differentials they foresee gigantic coastal storms, including blizzards lasting months.

I concur in Mr. Powers's hope that once the horrendous scope of a nuclear winter is grasped by the public, the only realistic step will be to eliminate our nuclear arsenals. We evidently have no argument with the Russians on that score.

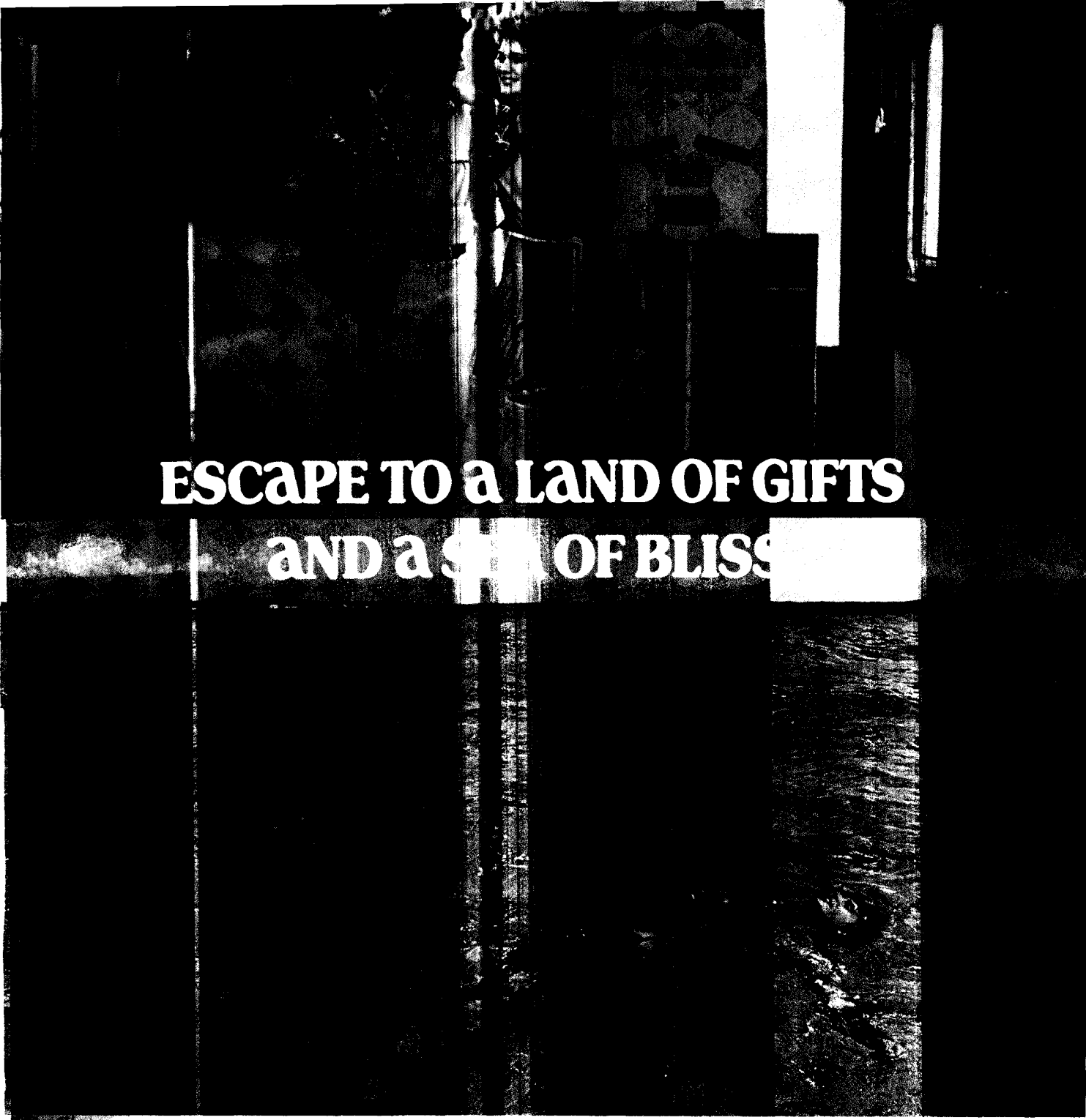
STUART G. HIBBEN
Accokeek, Md.

Thomas Powers's article refers at length to the Blue Book, a paper by five scientists concerned about the probable climatic consequences of nuclear war, and says the Blue Book is available "only in mimeographed form." Readers of *The Atlantic* might wish to know that Carl Sagan's summary of the Blue Book findings, along with the text of a December, 1983, *Science* article by the TTAPS group, can be found in our recently published book *The Cold and the Dark: The World After Nuclear War*, by Paul Ehrlich, Carl Sagan, Donald Kennedy, and Walter Orr Roberts.

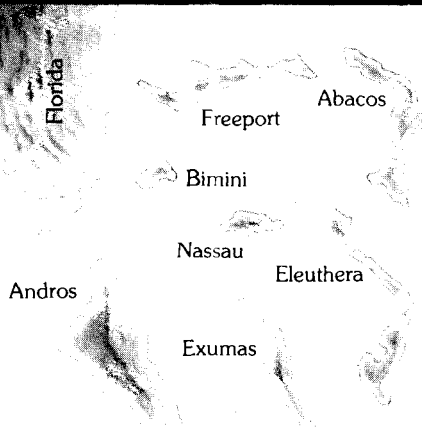
MARY CUNNANE
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NUCLEAR CONTAMINATION

The article "The Economics of Contamination" (October *Atlantic*) contained several references to the Saxton



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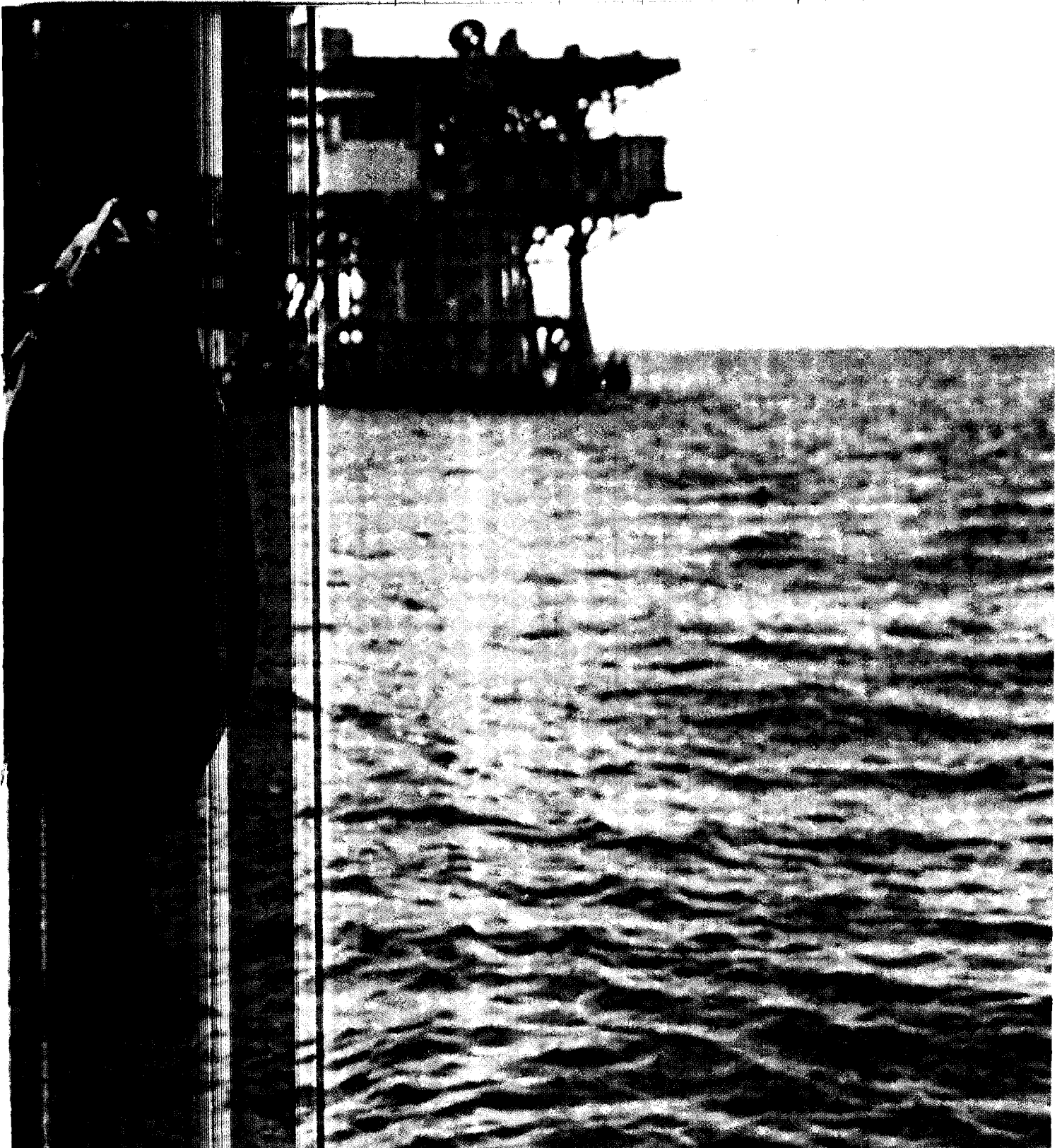


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with his son, Tony,
fishing near
Hillhouse oil rig
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Nuclear Experimental Facility in Pennsylvania. The references could have left readers with false and unsettling impressions.

The article reports that "four unscheduled releases" of radioactive gas occurred during the plant's operation from 1962 to 1972. The article does not report that the releases were well below federal limits and had no impact on plant workers or the public.

The article reports that an "informal survey" showed that the "local leukemia rate is more than four times the state average." The article does not report that the Pennsylvania Department of Health found "no indication of an abnormally high incidence of cancer in the area."

The article compares the Saxton facility to a closed reactor in California that reportedly has no place to ship its spent fuel. The article does not report that Saxton's nuclear fuel was shipped in 1972 to an Atomic Energy Commission disposal site. Some of the Saxton plant's buildings and equipment contain residual radiation, but nothing that approaches the levels in spent fuel.

The article describes GPU Nuclear Corporation's planned dismantlement of the plant as a "radioactive demolition experiment." The company does not consider the proposed dismantlement an experiment. The project will be done in accordance with well-accepted engineering and radiation-protection techniques.

The experimental days of the Saxton plant ended with its closing in 1972 as a test facility for a developing technology. It is now simply a plant that has served its purpose. The opposition of some people to the plant's dismantlement stems largely from misapprehensions. GPU Nuclear seeks to deal with such gaps in understanding by supplying the sort of facts the article ignores.

GORDON W. TOMB
Media Representative
GPU Nuclear Corporation
Middletown, Pa.

Carole Douglass makes much of the fact that nickel-59 and niobium-94 are embedded in the steel enclosing the nuclear core, making the steel too "hot" to handle. Nickel-59 emits only a weak x-ray, while niobium-94 is in extremely low concentrations in the steel. The direct radiation-dose rates from both nickel-59 and niobium-94 would be extremely low. The primary hazard of

these materials would come from eating or breathing nickel-59 or niobium-94 dust. However, an individual would have to inhale or eat several pounds of the reactor vessel to even approach a level of radioactive nickel and niobium hazardous to the body.

Douglass says that cost estimates are based on the decommissioning of two test reactors. This is not true. The studies I have looked at are based on the decommissioning of eleven reactors and six non-reactor nuclear facilities. Twenty-one decommissioning studies have been prepared, not just a few.

Three alternative approaches to decommissioning were discussed, yet one major alternative—"extended life operation of the light-water reactors"—was completely ignored. This process involves repairing and rebuilding a power plant to extend its operating life. Finally, Douglass cites "an informal survey showing that the local leukemia rate is more than four times the state average" around the Saxton reactor. Where is the report, and how was it prepared? This is a serious charge, and it should be substantiated with a report done by a group without a pro- or anti-nuclear bias.

W. A. NESTEL
Marietta, Ga.

Carole Douglass replies:

The releases Mr. Tomb refers to were accidental and considered significant enough to require special reports to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). That they had "no impact" is highly debatable: the federal government has widely accepted the proposition that there is *no* safe level of radiation except none. Furthermore, NRC documents show that on at least two occasions the amount of radiation released surpassed the measuring capabilities of the monitor, leaving doubt as to how much radioactivity escaped into the environment.

Both the locally produced informal survey and the state Department of Health's interpretation of the data are subject to dispute. I mentioned the local survey to illustrate the depth of mistrust between the residents and GPU, which may foreshadow similar conflicts in the future.

I did not say that spent fuel is still in the Saxton plant and did not intend to imply it. My article was concerned primarily with how to deal with radioactive plants themselves, rather than with used fuel.

Mr. Tomb disputes my use of the term "experimental." But dismantlements have not been performed frequently enough—nor have plant designs been uniform enough—for the industry to have worked out a standard method. Each situation thus presents a unique challenge and may justifiably be called an experiment. Also, a complete dismantlement at Saxton would be a first for GPU.

Finally, community opposition to the Saxton dismantlement stems not so much from "misapprehensions" as from apprehensions. Many residents distrust the judgment and actions of a company whose management was responsible for the worst mishap in the history of nuclear power and also has a history of falsifying reports to the NRC.

Despite W. A. Nestel's comments about niobium-94 and nickel-59, there are in fact easier ways to accumulate dangerous quantities of these substances than gnawing on the reactor vessel. Just standing next to it, for instance, may result in a dose as high as several rems an hour. But the major problem with these materials is their life-span. I wish Nestel or someone could prove that they will be safely isolated from human contact for the next few hundred thousand years—especially if they do end up buried in shallow land. One fear is that in a few generations these large pieces of stainless steel, if not well guarded, may be used as scrap metal. Think of the Juarez case, in which contaminated metal was made into table legs and sold throughout the United States.

Most U.S. decommissioning studies were either performed by one particular firm or are based on that firm's work. And the studies that deal with dismantling (although Nestel fails to do so, I distinguished "dismantling" from the more generic term "decommissioning") are based primarily on only a couple of instances, particularly the dismantlement of a research plant in Elk River, Minnesota. The techniques used there (along with some now being employed at Shippingport) are the closest thing to precedents that we have.

The industry is researching methods to extend the life of nuclear-power plants. The NRC, however, considers "extended life" a highly speculative proposition at best. In any case, prolonging a plant's life would only put off the day when final decommissioning will be necessary.

About that Saxton survey again: it was

The Quality of Imagination

Following are excerpts from a speech given by Harry J. Gray, chairman and chief executive officer of United Technologies, to alumni of the University of Illinois' College of Commerce and Business Administration. For a copy of the entire speech, write: Op-Ed, United Technologies, Hartford, Connecticut 06101.

American business is facing stiff competition from the rest of the world . . . We read that one reason other countries have had success is that they have adopted American technology. That's true. But it's not the only reason. I believe it's also because they have adopted American virtues.

They recognize, as we have recognized throughout our history, the importance of learning . . . the dignity of hard work . . . the meaning of patriotism . . . the need to take the initiative . . . the good that comes from helping others. They respect the individual. They admire perseverance. They value leadership.

Other countries may adopt our technology as well as our virtue. But there is one American virtue that other people can never fully adopt. It is our imagination.

We live in a country where people have the fullest possible freedom to praise, to criticize, or discuss and debate as we see fit. On that premise our country was created. On that

premise it has grown to greatness. We live in an open society. Throughout our history we always have shown a willingness to entertain new ideas, a tolerance for experimentation, an eagerness to try something different.

Our society was built on freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of speech, trial by jury. These freedoms have allowed our imaginations to flourish.

On the back of the one dollar bill is a Latin inscription: *annuit coeptis*. It means: be favorable to bold enterprise. Benjamin Franklin chose this motto because he believed imagination was the singular characteristic of the people he helped forge into a new nation.

To see the imaginative individual at work is to see the uncommon marvel of daring and deliberation working together, each carried to its highest level. The result sometimes may puzzle us, oftentimes stir us. But it will always rivet our attention.

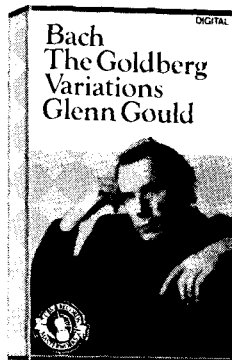
Our capacity for imagination has led us to expand the American frontiers across the continent.

Our capacity for imagination has brought about technological achievements which have changed our lives dramatically, irreversibly, and for the better.

Our capacity for imagination has given America its competitive edge.



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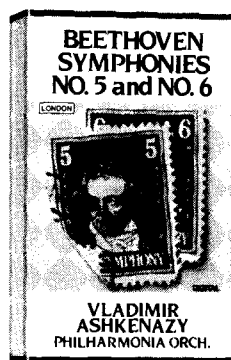
230425. Beethoven: Violin Concerto—Isaac Stern; Bernstein, New York Phil. (Columbia)

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321471. Gershwin: Piano Concerto in F; An American in Paris; Rhapsody in Blue—Andre Previn and the London Symphony (Angel)

HAYDN

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MAHLER

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325357. Mahler: Das Lied von der Erde—solists, N.Y. Phil., Bruno Walter, (Masterworks Portrait)



321851

MOZART

294264. Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 21 (Elvira Madigan) and No. 17—Ashkenazy plays, conducts Philharmonia Orch. (London)

325365. Mozart: Eine Kleine Nachtmusik; Symph. No. 40—Casals, Marlboro (Masterworks Portrait)

318311. Mozart: Symphonies 36 (Linz) 38 (Prague)—Rampal, Mostly Mozart Orch. (CBS Masterworks)

314955. Mozart: Symphonies No. 40 & 41 (Jupiter)—Szell, Cleveland Orch. (CBS Great Performances)

326975. Mozart: Violin Concerto No. 4; Adagio; Rondos—Zukerman plays, conducts St. Paul Chamber Orch. (CBS Masterworks)

SCHUBERT

322487. Schubert: "Death and the Maiden"; "Quartettsatz"—Tokyo String Quartet (Digital)—Vox Cum Laude

317677. Schubert: Symphony No. 8 (Unfinished); Rosamunde Overture and Ballet Music—von Karajan, Berlin Philharmonic (Angel)

321729. Schubert: The Impromptus, Op. 90 & 142—Murray Perahia, piano (Digital)—CBS Masterworks

325092. Schubert: Sonata in B Flat; etc.—Alicia de Larrocha (Digital)—London

320432. Schubert: String Quartets Nos. 12 & 13 (Quartettsatz)—Juilliard Quart. (CBS Masterworks)

TCHAIKOVSKY

312777. Tchaikovsky: Capriccio Italien; Rimsky-Korsakoff: Capriccio Espagnol; etc.—Bernstein (CBS Great Performances)

308874. Tchaikovsky: Piano Concerto No. 1—Gavrilov; Kitaenko cond. Moscow Radio/TV Sym. Orch. (Col./Melodiya)

231563. Tchaikovsky: Swan Lake and Sleeping Beauty Ballet Suites—Ormandy, Philadelphia Orchestra (Columbia)

329169. Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 4—Lorin Maazel, Cleveland Orch. (CBS Masterworks)

245399. Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 6 (Pathétique)—Ormandy and Phila. Orch. (Columbia)

304352-394353. Tchaikovsky: The Nutcracker (complete)—Andrew Davis, Toronto Symphony (Counts as 2—Columbia)

173666. Tchaikovsky's Greatest Hits—*Waltz of The Flowers; 1812 Overture*; more. Bernstein, N.Y. Phil.; Ormandy, Phila. (Columbia)

293191. Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto; Meditation—Stern; Rostropovich, National Sym. (Columbia)

BAROQUE

323543. Handel: Royal Fireworks Music; Oboe Concertos 1-3—Karl Münchinger, Stuttgart Chamber Orch. (Digital)—London

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324525. An Isaac Stern Vivaldi Gala: Concertos For 2 and 3 Violins; etc.—Stern, Zukerman, Perlman, others (CBS Masterworks)

MODERN

325274. Berg: Lulu Suite—also Schoenberg, Webern. Ormandy, Philadelphia Orch. (Masterworks Portrait)

326293. Bolling: Suite For Flute and Jazz Piano—Rampal, Bolling (Columbia)

240473. Copland: Appalachian Spring (complete)—Copland conducts London Symphony (Columbia)

309500. Copland: Rodeo; Billy The Kid—popular ballet scores played by Bernstein, New York Phil. (CBS Great Performances)

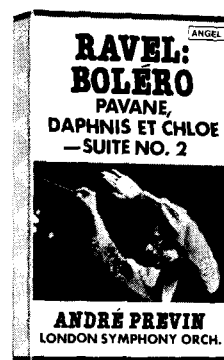
326439. Copland: Rodeo; Dance Symphony; El Salon Mexico; Fanfare for the Common Man—Dorati, Detroit Sym. (Digital)—London

329060. Falla: Nights in The Gardens of Spain; Three-Cornered Hat (Suite No. 2); etc.—Osonio, piano; de la Fuente, Xalapa Sym. (Digital)—Vox Cum Laude

319004. Glass, Philip: The Photographer—"Some of his best music to date"—Time (CBS)

201665. Grofe: Grand Canyon Suite—Ormandy, Phila. Orch. (Columbia)

326272. Holst: The Planets—Bernstein, New York Phil. (CBS Great Performances)



318451

326256. Ives: Symphony No. 4; Robert Browning Overture—Stokowski, cond. (Masterworks Portrait)

318246. Orff: Carmina Burana—Muti, Philharmonia Orch. & Chorus (Angel)

318691. Prokofiev: Love For Three Oranges Suite; Lt. Kije Suite—Thomas, L.A. Phil. (CBS Masterworks)

324533. Respighi: Feste Romane; Pines & Fountains Of Rome—Dutoit, Orch. de Montreal (Digital)—London

326223. Schoenberg: Pelleas & Melisande—Barenboim, Orch. de Paris (CBS Masterworks)

324046. Shostakovich: Cello Concerto No. 1; Kabalevsky: Cello Conc. No. 1—Yo-Yo Ma, cello; Ormandy, Philadelphia Orch. (Digital)—CBS Masterworks

281493. Stravinsky: Rite Of Spring. Zubin Mehta, N.Y. Phil. (Columbia)

326405. Stravinsky: The Firebird (complete ballet)—Dohnanyi, Vienna Philharmonic (Digital)—London

326322. Varese: Density; Ionisation; Integrates; etc.—Craft, Columbia Sym. (Masterworks Portrait)

ROMANTICS

325308. Berlioz: Lelio—Boulez conducts soloists, London Symphony & Chorus (Masterworks Portrait)

325282. Bruch: Violin Concerto; Lalo: Symphonie Espagnole—Francescatti, Mitropoulos, Schippers, cond. (Masterworks Portrait)

326454. Dvorak: Cello Concerto; Bruch: Kol Nidrei—Harrell; Ashkenazy, Philharmonia Orch. (Digital)—London

326926. Dvorak: Legends—Zinman, Rochester Phil. (Digital)—Nonesuch

325381. Grieg: Piano Concerto; Schumann: Piano Concerto—Leon Fleisher; Szell, Cleveland Orch. (Masterworks Portrait)

228684. Grieg: Peer Gynt Suites 1 and 2; Bizet: Carmen Suites—Leonard Bernstein and the New York Phil. (Columbia)

321190. Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsodies 1, 4, 6; Rakoczy March; etc.—Boskovsky, Phil. Hungarica (Angel)

305730. Mendelssohn: Symphony No. 4 (Italian); Overtures—Andre Previn, London Symphony (Angel)

309492. Mussorgsky: Pictures At An Exhibition; Night On Bald Mountain—Bernstein, New York Phil. (CBS Great Performances)



326553

310698. Offenbach: Gaité Parisienne; Saint-Saens: Danse Macabre; Dukas: Sorcerer's Apprentice—Maazel, Orch. National de France (Columbia)

245043. Rachmaninoff: Piano Concertos No. 1 & 2—Ashkenazy, Previn, London Symphony (London)

176578. Rachmaninoff's Greatest Hits—vocalise; *Piano Concerto No. 2; 3 Preludes*; etc. Various artists (Columbia)

318436. Rimsky-Korsakov: Scheherazade—Svetlanov, London Symphony (Angel)

325100. Saint-Saens: Carnival of the Animals—also works by Debussy, Satie, Philip Jones Brass Ensemble (Digital)—London

300871. Saint-Saens: Piano Concerto No. 3; Africa; more—Entremont, Plasseon, cond. (Columbia)

314260. Salieri: Sinfonia Veneziana; more—Pesko, cond. (CBS Masterworks)

234237. Schumann: Piano Concerto; Mendelssohn: Piano Concerto No. 1—Rudolf Serkin; Ormandy, Phila. Orch. (Columbia)

225888. Smetana: Moldau, Bartered Bride Overture, Dances; Dvorak: Carnival Overture—Bernstein, N.Y. Phil. (Columbia)

310870-390872. Johann Strauss' Greatest Waltzes Ormandy, Szell, Bernstein (Counts as 2—Columbia)

320424. Richard Strauss: Ein Heldenleben—Dicterow, violin; Mehta, N.Y. Phil. (Digital)—CBS Masterworks

202796. Richard Strauss: Also Sprach Zarathustra—Bernstein, New York Philharmonic (Columbia)

326660. Suppe: Overtures—Poet and Peasant; Light Cavalry; etc.—Solti, Vienna Phil. (London/Jubilee)

326447. Verdi: Overtures—*La Forza del Destino; I Vespri Siciliani; Nabucco*; etc. Chailly, National Philharmonic (Digital)—London

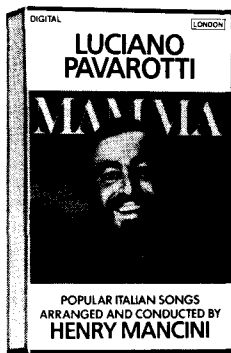
321844-391847. Verdi: La Traviata—Original Motion Picture Soundtrack. Stars Domingo, Stratas (Counts as 2—Elektra)

227333. Wagner: Orchestral Music from "The Ring"—Ride of the Valkyries, etc. Mehta and New York Phil. (Digital)—CBS Masterworks

310086. Wagner: Overtures—*Flying Dutchman; Rienzi*; etc. Maazel, Philharmonia Orch. (Columbia)

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325886. Liona Boyd—*Live In Tokyo*. Works by Dowland, Soler, Failla, etc. (Digital—CBS Masterworks)

305714. Canadian Brass—*Royal Fanfare*. Works by Bach, Joplin, Mendelssohn, Des Prez, etc. (Vanguard)

329128. Wendy Carlos' "Digital Moonscapes"—an exciting tour de force (Digital—CBS Masterworks)

203745. Horowitz Plays *Rachmaninoff*—Sonata in B-Flat; Prelude G-Sharp; 3 Etudes-Tableaux (Columbia)

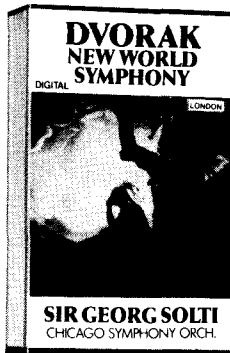
327007. Patrick Gleeson's *Computer Realization of Vivaldi's Four Seasons* (Digital—Varese Sarabande)

328112. Lili Kraus Plays *Bartok*—Hungarian Peasant Songs & Folksongs; Rondos; Sonatina, etc. (Vanguard)

26413. Alicia de Larrocha plays *Granados*—Danzas españolas (London)

13767. Ruth Laredo Plays *avel*—La Valse, Miroirs, etc. (CBS Masterworks)

26603. Ivan Moravec plays *Schumann & Brahms*. *Inderszenen, Intermezzo*; *ore* (Digital—Nonesuch)



325183

280610. Jean-Pierre Rampal *Greatest Hits*—Debussy's *Girl With The Flaxen Hair*; Handel's *Largo*; etc. (Columbia)

319582. Jean-Pierre Rampal *Plays Scott Joplin*. *The Entertainer*, etc. (CBS)

329151. Renaissance Brass performing works by Byrd, Gibbons, Farnaby (Argo)

309237. Daniel Varso—*Erik Satie Piano Music*. *Gymnopédies*, *Sonatine Burlesque*, etc. (Columbia)

319848. Andre Watts—*Live In Tokyo*. Works by Ravel, Brahms, Debussy, Haydn, etc. (Digital—CBS Masterworks)

320895. Portrait of John Williams—Theme from "The Deerhunter"; *Fool On The Hill*; etc. (CBS Masterworks)

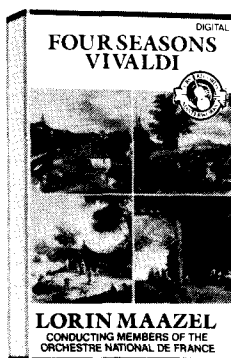
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322347. Marilyn Horne—*Live At La Scala*. Music by Granados, Handel, Copland, etc. (CBS Masterworks)

326108. Mormon Tabernacle Choir—*Faith Of Our Fathers*. Traditional hymns (Digital—CBS Masterworks)

303453-393454. Pavarotti's *Greatest Hits*. Works by Bellini, Puccini, Verdi, etc. (Counts as 2—London)

326421. Leontyne Price *Sings Verdi*—arias from *Aida*, *Otello*, etc. (London)

321463. Beverly Sills and Andre Kostelanetz—*Music of Victor Herbert*. *Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life*, etc. (Angel)

326397. Sutherland/Horne/Pavarotti—*Live From Lincoln Center*. A truly grand program (Digital—London)

316570. The Tango Project—*La Cumparsita*; *Adios Muchachos*, etc. William Schimmel, accordion; etc. (Digital—Nonesuch)

324772. Kiri Te Kanawa—*Songs of the Auvergne* (by Canteloube). English Chamber Orch. (Digital—London)

320887. Kiri Te Kanawa—Verdi and Puccini Arias. Pritchard, London Phil. (Digital—CBS Masterworks)

329722. Wagner: *Lohengrin* (Highlights)—Peter Hofmann, tenor; Bayreuth Festival Orch. & Chorus (CBS Masterworks)

329136. Waverly Consort—*Sephardic Songs*; songs by Gombert, de Victoria, etc. (CBS Masterworks)

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performed by a Saxton man with some graduate training in statistics. I agree that it would be useful to have the survey corroborated by an outside party.

PEACETIME WAR

Nicholas Lemann ("The Peacetime War," October *Atlantic*) claims that HMS *Sheffield* was an aircraft carrier and was sunk by an Argentine Exocet missile. Both statements are false. The *Sheffield* was a 6,000-ton destroyer, not a 90,000-ton aircraft carrier. Even so, the Exocet that hit it did not sink the *Sheffield* but set it afire. The flammable electronic wiring crammed into its lightweight metal superstructure exacerbated the blaze and rendered it uncontrollable. Once it had burned itself out, the British decided that the ship was beyond salvage and scuttled it.

For Mr. Lemann's information, only one ship was sunk by an anti-ship missile during the Falklands War, but it was a defenseless merchantman and its demise certainly does not constitute a revolution in naval warfare.

Mr. Lemann also claims that the Soviets have only one small carrier and implies that it has no jet fighters. In point of fact the Soviets have three carriers of the Kiev class and are building another. Moreover, Mr. Lemann conveniently ignores the fact that the Soviets are currently building at least one and possibly more carriers of a size comparable to the Nimitz-class carriers. All of the Soviet carriers, present and future, have jet-fighter capability, although the present three operate Forger jets, similar to the British Harrier "jump jets."

CHARLES CUTSHAW
Aberdeen, Md.

Nicholas Lemann suggests that a better balance might be struck between Department of Defense spending on procurement and on readiness. Well, yes and no. If we are attacked this week, we might wish that more had been spent this year on ammunition, fuel, and training in the field. If we are attacked in 1989, we'll be glad that the procurement accounts grew in 1981-1984.

It is *not* true that training and repairs must be costlier on our new generation of weapons. Subcaliber devices and laser-engagement and other simulators can help us create realistic training at lower cost in repair parts, ammunition, and fuel.

Finally, remember that attempts to raise larger forces are affected by the willingness of young citizens to join the services, submit to their discipline and fitness standards, pull night and weekend duty, and someday risk death or permanent physical maiming far from the United States.

LT. COL. ROBERT P. FAIRCHILD
Fort Monroe, Va.

Nicholas Lemann replies:

I was wrong in saying that the *Sheffield* was a carrier, and also in putting the number of Soviet carriers at one instead of three. I don't think I implied that the Soviet Kiev-class carrier has no jet fighters; what I said was that it lacks a catapult to launch jets, which is true. By "small" I mean that the Kiev-class carrier has a displacement of 37,100 tons, while our Nimitz-class carrier displaces 91,400 tons.

Lieutenant Colonel Fairchild raises a point that I didn't have a chance to make in the article. He's right that our military is limited to its recruits; in fact, most career officers I've met quietly yearn for a return to the draft, because then we wouldn't have to pay market rates for our soldiers and so might be able to afford more of them—and get a higher proportion of the college-educated in the bargain. A favorite theme of Secretary Weinberger's is the unpopularity of defense spending. But a draft during peacetime, which really would be all the things that Weinberger says the higher budgets are—a sign of national resolve, a way to improve our capabilities, a deterrent to war, and very unpopular—has been repeatedly rejected by the Administration. In the White House there has been some genuine libertarian principle behind this, mainly in the person of the former chief domestic adviser, Martin Anderson, but in the Pentagon most officials privately describe it as a triumph of politics over military needs. Meanwhile, it is hard to detect the unpopularity of defense spending with the public in the outcome of last year's campaigns.

IN DEFENSE OF CUSTER

Any student of "Custeriana" reading Phoebe-Lou Adams's review of Evan S. Connell's *Son of the Morning Star* (October *Atlantic*) can only agree with Mr. Connell's own statement: "These days it is stylish to denigrate the gener-

al. . . ." It is particularly unfair to state that Custer was mourned "by a great many people who knew very little about Custer"; this implies that familiarity always bred contempt. But after Custer and his detachment were destroyed, Seventh Cavalryman David E. Dawsey wrote: "When the red devils got Custer they cut the heart out of this Regiment. It is not often a soldier wastes tears over an Officer but I saw many an old hand wipe his eyes with his blouse sleeve (we had no handkerchiefs) the day we buried Custer." The paradoxical Boy General inspired great loyalty as well as bitter hatred. Both merit attention.

The review says that *Son's* Plains Indians chiefs seem, "for all their somewhat puzzling ways, sensible men doing their best against what they considered a brutal and treacherous enemy." Apparently the reviewer skipped over page 143 (crediting the Kiowa chief Satanta with bashing a baby against a tree) or page 340 (telling how soldiers capturing one Cheyenne village found therein "a necklace of brown fingers, the arm of a squaw, and . . . the right hands of twelve [Shoshone] Indian babies"). By what "puzzling" standards these Indians judged even the worst white soldiers to have been peculiarly "brutal" is unexplained.

Mr. Connell's book boasts an impressive bibliography (citing many of my fellows in the Little Big Horn Associates) and contains much information. But the reviewer closed with a quote supposedly "accounting" for the Little Big Horn defeat—even though it referred to Custer's Civil War career—saying that in a tight spot Custer's response was "instantaneous and predictable: he charged." Instead of perishing in a hell-for-leather dash at the "last stand" his detachment was wiped out after dismounting to fight.

WAYNE M. SARF
Riverdale, N.J.

Phoebe-Lou Adams replies:

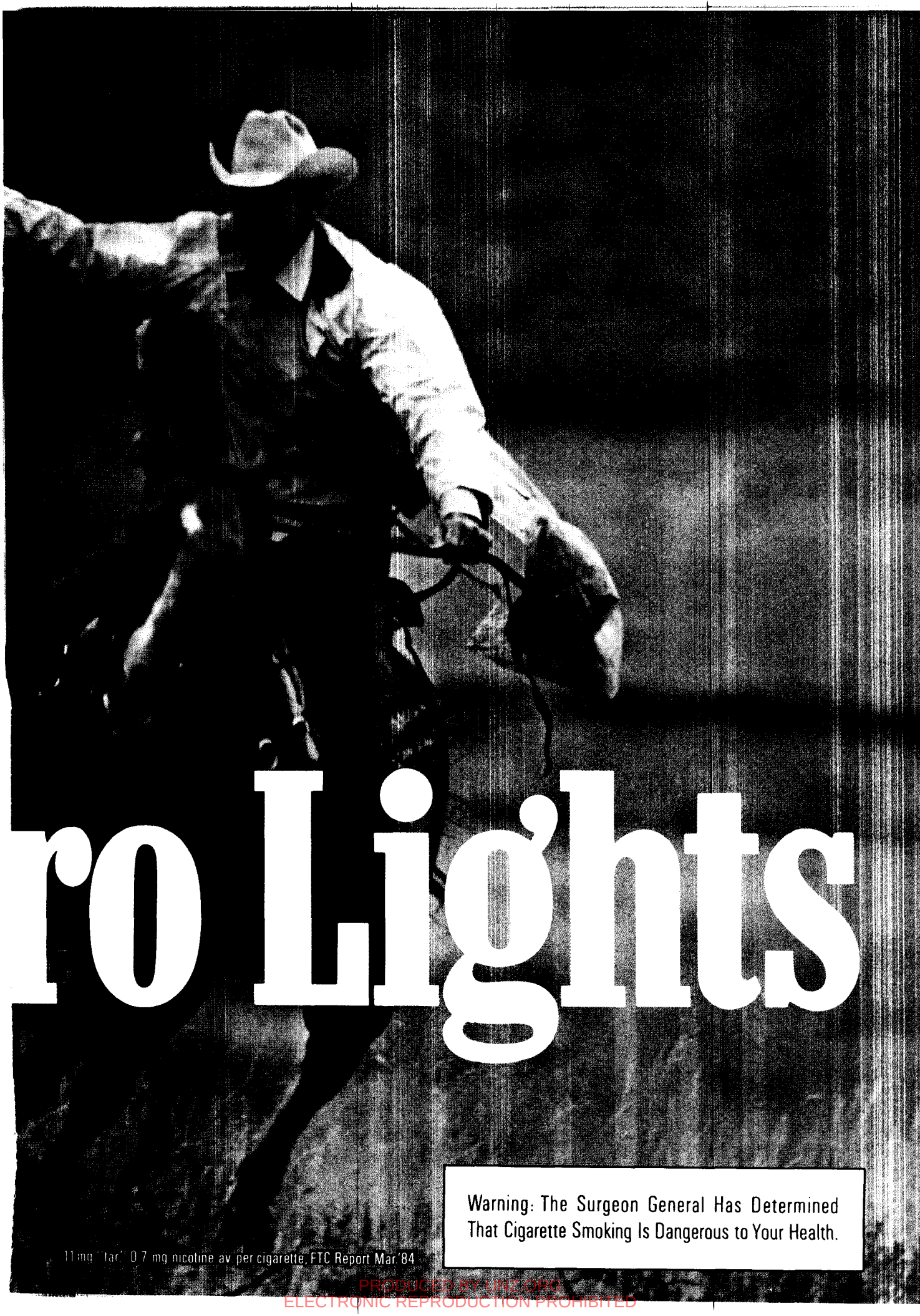
As a member of the Little Big Horn Associates, Mr. Sarf is evidently among those historians who continue, as my review acknowledged, to argue for "Custer the hero." He quotes one cavalryman's favorable view of Custer; Mr. Connell quotes many unfavorable views, including one from Ulysses S. Grant. Mr. Sarf describes the savagery of Indian warfare, which has been done often enough in the past. He does not consider the history of land thefts, unkept



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promises, broken treaties, burned-out villages, and murdered women which enraged the Indians and justified their view of whites as dishonest brutes. Mr. Connell does, and the list is long and, for non-Indians, humiliating. In my opinion, Mr. Connell has provided more than enough evidence to de-heroize both Custer and the western-frontier army. Mr. Sarf's final complaint, however, is interesting. The line I quoted, "In a tight situation his [Custer's] response was instantaneous and predictable: he charged," applied, as Mr. Sarf knows, not to the Little Big Horn but to Custer's character. If, once he had discovered the size of the Indian force, Custer had considered himself to be in a tight situation, he would have attacked, which is just what he did. He may even have been right to do so, for his chances of withdrawing safely if the Indians chose to pursue him must have been small.

THE AMERICAN HOUSE

Philip Langdon's article on the American house was admirable from several standpoints, but he dealt obliquely with two rather basic changes in the American house.

First, new homes have all shrunk in size, and not simply because of empty-nesters, boomer careerists, and the divorced multitudes. The three-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bath house has shrunk as well, owing to the short-term economies of building cost as well as the long-term energy efficiencies and financing costs of larger homes.

Second, residential additions have grown in importance as a mainstream, high-art block of the design-and-construction industry. This new construction makes sense because of cheap financing and because so many builder-designed homes of the twenties, fifties, and sixties simply do not fit the requirements of the eighties. Those requirements have to do with the nature of the living space (informality has supplanted "elegance"), a new view of kitchen needs (cooking is now a performance art), and energy efficiency (sunspaces, insulation, airlock/mudrooms, and so forth), and the master-bedroom/bath extravaganza articulated in the article.

So, readers can have what they want, without the chafing constriction of condos or a house-rich, money-poor future of bad-value building. New ways are being tested to make Americans give up in

a painless manner their traditional lust for unlimited dwelling space. Similarly, architects have tackled the traditionally low-art field of residential additions, with some gratifying results.

DUO DICKINSON
Architect
Branford, Conn.

Philip Langdon confirms that American culture (represented in this instance by architecture) has indeed descended into an "age of mediocrity."

A people who give the world such phrases as "genuine imitation" and "personnel equivalents" cannot, in good faith, be faulted for selecting form over substance.

Yet chills ran the length of my spine upon reading Mr. Friedman's statement "When covered with vegetation, walls become very benign." Newspeak may yet triumph, but a wall is a wall is a wall.

DONNIE R. HUGHES
Rancho Cordova, Calif.

Thanks for Philip Langdon's excellent overview of the housing industry. However, I was disappointed that Mr. Langdon did not give more attention to air solar panels. I think the impression given, that active solar systems are too leak-prone and too complicated to apply to the mass housing market, is erroneous. Modern air solar collectors with superior materials of construction skirt the leak-failure problems and are just not complicated.

FRED LOCKEMANN
President, Solar Bear, Inc.
Chattanooga, Tenn.

Philip Langdon replies:

It's true that air solar panels avoid the potential problem of leaking water or antifreeze. However, some air-based solar mechanisms are afflicted by poor connections, especially in their ductwork, so they may leak a considerable portion of the hot air they are supposed to collect and distribute. Two other possible sources of dissatisfaction are the greater amount of energy spent in operating a hot-air system and the larger space needed for the rock bin that stores the heat.

ADVICE & CONSENT

If the examples of people on welfare and food stamps in Nicholas Lemann's article "Washington: The Cul-

ture of Poverty" (September *Atlantic*) are any indication, the rolls for both need to be cut further. As a hardworking taxpayer, I am appalled to see how this part of my tax money is still being spent. Mr. Lemann seems to feel that we taxpayers should take pity on his examples and be delighted to rush to their assistance. Not this one. Should we support people who are so unmotivated to help themselves?

Should I bleed for the Chatman group—forty-eight-year-old mother, two minors in high school, plus three grown daughters and their four babies? Lemann explains how the mother budgets her monthly allotments. But what of the three daughters, who get an additional \$148, \$128, and \$128 respectively? Would money be so tight if they paid their share of household expenses? Instead of going on welfare, most families would have solved the Chatmans' problem in a different way: Mama would babysit the minors while the three grown daughters worked at some sort of jobs. If Mama couldn't handle four babies alone, the daughters would stagger their work hours. I see no mention of bread being baked at home to save money, or of a vegetable garden (even pots of tomatoes), clothes sewn with needle and thread, teenagers working after school or on weekends, even at below-minimum wages.

No doubt some people do need our help, but let's make some distinctions here. Are the rules wrong or are they interpreted incorrectly in some cases? When someone says he is not eating as well as he once did, does he mean he's reduced to eating hamburger instead of steak? When he says he can't find a job, does he mean he can't find one he likes or one that pays union wages? When his housing is wretched, is it because he breaks windows when he's drunk, won't spend a few pennies on nails to hold up a sagging floor, or won't pick up the trash in his yard unless he's paid by the hour?

People are poor for a variety of reasons. Only a few should be the taxpayers' responsibility: the elderly, the ill, the handicapped, orphans, and anyone who is actively learning a skill that will make him employable. People who are mentally and physically capable of helping themselves have no business being supported by the taxpayer, although they could be provided with short-term instruction on how to budget their time and money to be more productive. If they don't take command of their own

welfare, that's their problem, not the taxpayers'.

BARBARA MCEWAN
Goode, Va.

When John S. Oppenheimer, of Frankestown, N.H., was straining at gnats (Letters to the Editor, October *Atlantic*), he let one fly that should have been swatted.

Field-artillery forward observers did not search for "targets worthy of their 155 howitzers." Their cannons were 105mm howitzers, smaller and entirely different artillery pieces. Each infantry-division artillery had three battalions of 105mm howitzers, each 105 battalion dedicated to direct support of one of the division's three infantry regiments. The single 155mm battalion of the division artillery was almost habitually employed in a tactical mission of *general support*, which did not require it to provide forward observers to infantry companies.

LT. COL. WILLIAM J. WOOD, RET.
Concord, N.C.

As an F-16 pilot who has flown fighter aircraft in the active Air Force for three years and in the Air National

Guard for the past eleven, I would like to add one argument to those advanced by Gregg Easterbrook ("The Airplane That Doesn't Cost Enough," August *Atlantic*) in favor of the F-20 fighter.

The Soviets are currently producing fighter and strike aircraft at a rate sufficient to duplicate, numerically, the entire U.S. fighter/strike force every three and a half years. Higher technology will not close this gap.

In the air war, as in other phases of combat, the battle is won with numbers. Given roughly equal pilots and roughly equivalent operating envelopes, any four fighters of one type will inevitably prevail over any two fighters of another. Any six will almost always prevail over any four. If two F-16s were to engage four bomb-carrying F-4s (Vietnam-era Phantoms) en route to a target, two F-4s would succeed in the strike while two would engage (and probably succumb to) the F-16s.

There is no reason for American military leaders—or politicians, for that matter—to fear cheaper fighters. Given lower procurement costs and a lower support-personnel requirement, we could spend the same amount of money

(or more), employ the same number of manufacturing workers and military and civilian support personnel (or increase that number), and significantly increase the total number of fighters within a given command or unit.

RICHARD B. WATSON
Columbia, S.C.

As an income-tax preparer, I would like to take exception to a statement in Tom Wicker's review of *The New American Poverty*, by Michael Harrington ("The Other America Revisited," October *Atlantic*): "And 84 percent of the \$19.6 billion in revenue lost annually from the deduction of home-mortgage interest goes to those with more than \$30,000 a year in income. Low-income renters get no such break."

The low-income renter benefits by the \$2,300 (single) or \$3,400 (married filing jointly) base amount that is not taxed. This amount covers interest or taxes hidden in rent. The homeowner must document that he or she has paid out *more* than this amount in legitimate deductions before any benefit accrues.

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Midland, Mich.

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REPORTS & COMMENT

SCOTLAND

THE ORIGIN OF THE KILT

It is not a vestige of the ancient clans but an invention of enterprising merchants

I FOUND MY OLD kilt in a cupboard the other day and had an instant memory of myself, attired in this same kilt, marching into my school dining room behind a piper and a gray-brown sausage with a caliber of some 200 millimeters. When the piper had stopped and the platter bearing the sausage had been set down, I waved a knife over it and began chanting in a bogus Scottish accent,

"Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,
Great chieftain o' the puddin'-race!
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,
Painch, tripe, or thairm:
Weel are ye wordy o' a grace
As lang's my arm. . . ."

And at the conclusion of Burns's "Address to a Haggis," amid a few cheers from my schoolfellows I plunged in the knife to liberate the minced sheep's guts and oatmeal from their casing.

It's the same the world over on Burns Night, every January 25, the anniversary of the poet's birth, in 1759. Those who proclaim and call themselves Scottish or who have an elective affinity to Burns and Scotland gather to eat haggis or a simulacrum of this neolithic cuisine, hoist a large number of toasts, and in consequence drink a great deal of whisky. In fact, whenever I ponder the blend of sentimentality, tartanry, and alcohol that nourishes the Scottish myth in a profitable association of fake history and commerce, I think of the days after

Christmas that begin with Hogmanay, or New Year's Eve, and end with the Burns supper.

Hogmanay, more important by far in Scotland than Christmas, is a pinnacle of pagan release and rejoicing amid the arid badlands of Calvinism, and indeed is Druidic in origin. One resourceful Scottish etymologist at the end of the eighteenth century even sought to derive the word from an ancient Gallo-Druidic chant, "*Au gui menex*," or "Lead us to the mistletoe." Less romantically, Evelyn Waugh wrote that Hogmanay provoked a vision of men vomiting on the sidewalks of Glasgow, and that's rather the way I remember it: a binge resuming in one tumultuous spasm the Scottish propensity, rivaled perhaps only by that of the Poles, for dogged consumption of alcohol.

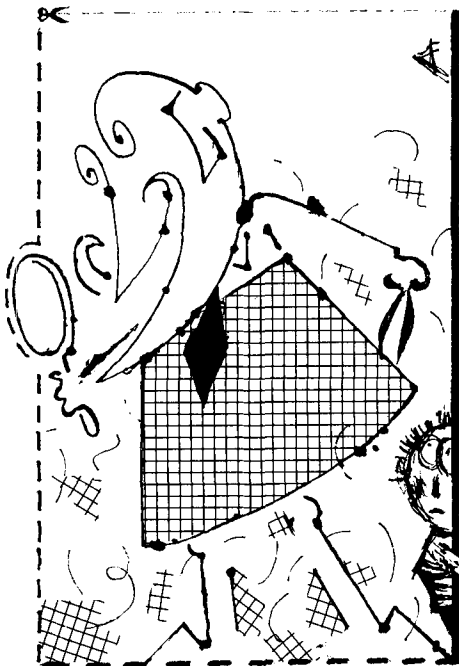
If Hogmanay is drinking unadorned, Burns Night is more decorously caparisoned, but a decoding of some of the

rites tells us a fair amount about a land where, as the Scottish socialist Tom Nairn wrote, "ideal has never, even for one instant, coincided with fact. . . . Modern Scotland is the product of a history without truth, a sterility where dream is unrelated to character, and both bear little relationship to what happens."

Take the old kilt I found recently, and which I wore at that Burns supper at my Scottish school almost thirty years ago. Most boys at Trinity College, Glenalmond—an Episcopalian institution founded by Gladstone and set at the foot of the Highlands some ten miles from Perth—wore kilts on Sundays and on other special occasions. These tartan kilts were of patterns associated, allegedly from time immemorial, with certain clans. A MacLeod would have his tartan, a MacDonald his, and so forth.

At the school outfitters in Edinburgh my parents and I had discovered that it was possible to secure a kilt of Cockburn tartan, but that it would have to be specially woven and would therefore be costly. So I simply chose an attractive design off the shelf, and my very first day I was furiously accosted by a youth who demanded to know what claim I had on the Leslie tartan. It was a bad moment for a new boy, and as soon as I outgrew the illicit Leslie I procured an unpleasing but licensed specimen of something called The Hunting Murray tartan, which Glenalmond boys with no specific claims were permitted to wear.

This apparatus could be displayed in various degrees of grandeur. On simple Sundays one wore the kilt on the bottom half, with a sporran suspended from a strap around one's haunches. The upper half of the body was encased in a waistcoat and a short cutaway jacket. When it came to the matter of military parades, things got considerably more elaborate. For the simple leather sporran we substi-



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tuted a hairier receptacle, like a blonde wig. The night before any military parade we would shampoo the hair on these sporrans, comb them carefully, and hang them above our beds; then we fastened them about our loins in the morning. Cadet officers would have tremendous plaid cloaks, and many of us sported a *sgian dubh*—Gaelic words for a small knife thrust down the side of one's knee-high stocking. Thus arrayed, and with the skirl of the pipe band screeching in our ears, we fancied ourselves the precise lineal image of ancient Scotland.

IN THIS SUPPOSITION we were entirely wrong, just as young Leslie was wrong in imagining that I had trespassed on his ancient tartan rights. As Scottish antiquaries and scholars, and recently Hugh Trevor-Roper in a most entertaining essay ("The Highland Tradition of Scotland," in *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger), have labored successfully to demonstrate, the kilt is a comparatively recent invention, having been devised by a Quaker industrialist in the 1730s for the convenience of his Highland work force.

Scotland's "history without truth," in which the bogus ancestry of the kilt is but one episode, basically consists of the conversion of its fringe Celtic Highland culture, essentially the consequence of Irish settlement and influence. This was made to bear the substantive burden of the nation's history—which should more properly have reveled in the splendid achievements of its eastern, Lowland component, the Scotland of the Picts, the Saxons, and the Normans.

Before the birth of Romanticism and the discovery of the Gaelic *volk* the Highlands and their inhabitants had been disparaged as unattractive and dangerous. One English traveler, writing in 1694 under the name R. Franck Philanthropus, remarked of Highland scenery, "It is a part of the creation left undressed; rubbish thrown aside when the magnificent fabric of the world was created; as void of form as the natives are indigent of morals and good manners."

A hundred years later, after the Jacobite revolts had been mercilessly crushed, a very different situation obtained. Macaulay put it well, with the caustic observation that "as long as there were Gaelic marauders, they had been regarded by the Saxon population as hateful vermin who ought to be exterminated without mercy. As soon as the

extermination had been accomplished, . . . the freebooter was exalted into a hero of romance." And amid this exaltation Highland dress—or "striped petticoats," as Macaulay called it—was found to be "the most graceful drapery in Europe."

The Highland dress had in fact been a long Irish shirt with a tunic and an enveloping "plaid," or blanket, used as such at night. The better sort wore "trews," a mixture of breeches and stockings. The plaid blanket, some six yards long and two yards wide, was set upon the ground and folded into pleats on which the wearer then lay and wrapped himself, fastening a belt about his waist. Below the belt hung a short length of plaid, and the remainder was disposed about the wearer's upper half to his own satisfaction. The sporran was originally a goatskin srip in which the Highlander kept provisions. Travelers frequently complained of finding goat hairs in their cheese. So how did this billowing envelope of bedding become the "ancient" kilt?

The Quaker manufacturer, Thomas Rawlinson, came to the Highlands from Lancashire in the 1730s to establish an iron-smelting foundry. Noting the difficulty his work force had in performing their tasks in the cumbersome "belted plaid," he summoned a tailor from Inverness who amputated the lower extremity and sewed it into pleats, thus inventing the kilt—which rapidly became a most popular garment among the Highland folk.

But what of the ancient tartans, peculiar to each clan? Tartan, the geometrical arrangement of patterns equivalent in two directions, is not peculiar to Scotland. It appears, as one historian has noted, in a Sieneese Renaissance painting and in Japanese prints of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tartans probably came to Scotland from Flanders in the fifteenth century; in the Highlands they were generally of russet colors, with the darker hues intensified in the dyeing process by putrid urine. Purchasers of tartans secured the designs that pleased them most, with no thought to ancestral claims, which indeed did not exist. Paintings show some of these Gaelic peacocks wearing as many as three tartan patterns at the same time. The *Caledonian Mercury* in 1845 advertised to consumers "a great choice of tartans, the newest patterns."

A cluster of events transformed the tartan into an instrument of nationalist

ideology. In the wake of the great defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1745, the British banned Highland wear, including tartans and the kilt, under penalty of six months in prison for a first offense and seven years' transportation for a second. The elder Pitt simultaneously formed the Highland regiments for service abroad. They alone were permitted to wear the plaid and the kilt, both for reasons of esprit de corps and, no doubt, to impede desertion: a man running about in a skirt south of the border or in France was a conspicuous object. This is, most likely, when tartans peculiar to certain regiments became established. Finally, Scottish nationalism, seeking to extirpate both Irish and Lowland roots of the culture, turned to the literal invention of an ancient Highland culture, kilt and all. The final triumph came when Lowland Scotland, offered this bogus tradition, eagerly accepted it.

No one viewed the growing popularity of tartans with more satisfaction than the tartan manufacturers, who enthusiastically fostered the myth of ancestral patterns, particularly after the repeal of the ban on Highland garb, in 1782. Their finest hour came with the visit of George IV to Edinburgh in 1822. The ceremonies were managed by Sir Walter Scott, who had himself been overtaken by the Celtic mania. He urged the Highland chieftains to drill their tenants to appear to be clansmen of ancient times and to come attired in their ancient habiliments. The chieftains, along with many Lowlanders, wrote anxiously to the tartan manufacturers, who strove to slake the sudden demand. They were equal to the hour. As Trevor-Roper recounts it, every piece of tartan was sold as it came off the loom. To take one example among many, the newly created "Macpherson tartan" had previously been sold in bulk to a Mr. Kidd to clothe his West Indian slaves; previous to that it had been known simply as "No. 155."

The imprimatur on this tartan frenzy was conferred by George IV. The Hanoverian monarch chose to demonstrate his respect for the supposed usages of ancient Scotland by "disguising himself," as Macaulay put it, "in what, before the Union [in 1707], was considered by nine Scotchmen out of ten as the dress of a thief." The prosperity of the tartan manufacturers has continued undiminished to this day. It was probably about the time of the royal visit that some member of the Cockburn family, an ornament of the Lowland border

country for several hundred years, thought it appropriate to secure a "Cockburn tartan." I most recently viewed this not unattractive design—blue, yellow, and white stripes across a blue and green background—in the New York Public Library's copy of the *Records of the Cockburn Family*, a large volume published in 1913. The authors say that "it will probably be news to many to know that we can boast possession of a Tartan," though they do have the honesty to add that the "whole status of Tartans, from a historical point of view, is however rather unsatisfactory."

Truth has long been a victim of the hunger for a romantic ancestral heritage and the urge to stow the aching void of Scottish history and Scottish national identity with something besides oatmeal, whisky (an Irish invention), and the sacred haggis (the heart, lights, and

liver of a sheep mixed with oatmeal, suet, onions, and gravy and boiled in the creature's stomach, in a scarcely altered reminiscence of the hunter-gatherers' cooking the more perishable parts of their kill in its paunch over their fires). It is to enjoy this prehistoric repast that the participants in Burns suppers round the world gather on January 25, many of them garbed in those striped petticoats of English Quaker design, to honor a poet, "Rabbie Burns," who was himself so crushed by the weight of the Scottish past that he remarked near death, "I have known only existence by the pressure of sickness and counted time by the repercussions of pain."

—Alexander Cockburn

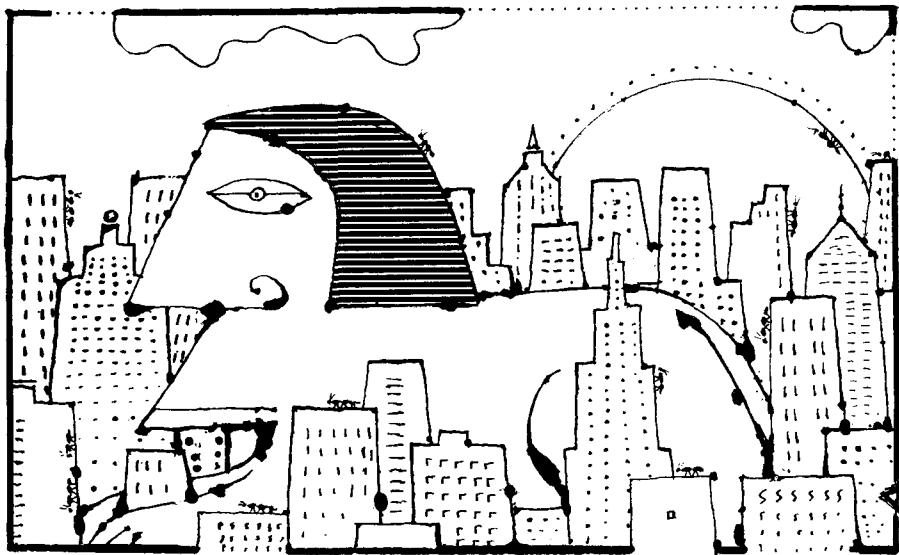
Alexander Cockburn is a columnist for The Nation and The Wall Street Journal, and he contributes to numerous publications.

markings, while at Thebes paintings were flaking off the walls of tombs.

The disruption of the Nile's ancient cycle of flooding has compelled farmers to use high-phosphate fertilizers, whose saline drainage seeps beneath the monuments. Problems arising from the lack of natural fertilizers have affected more than classical tourist sites. Huge mud mounds, called *koms* or tells, dot the river valley, especially in the Delta; these contain the story of daily village life in ancient Egypt, which archaeologists—preoccupied for so long with the posterity-minded elite—are only beginning to study. Deprived of the Nile's rich alluvial deposits, peasants have picked away at the *sebbakh*, or fertile composted soil, of these tells. Meanwhile, new farms, factories, and housing complexes are encroaching on antiquities sites that have not been formally surveyed, let alone excavated. "The Delta sites are being degraded daily and visibly—in fifteen years nothing will remain," says Dr. John Holladay, Jr., an archaeologist at the University of Toronto who has dug at a site in the Delta called Tell el Mas-khuta.

The threat to the monuments has evolved during a decade of growing nationalism, when the need to enlist European and American assistance has galled Egyptians. Yet the preservation of damaged antiquities and the recording of those that cannot be saved require highly scientific archaeological expertise, which the Egyptians lack. The Egyptians' wish to solve matters independently and the inseparability of the conservation problem and national progress have affected the official response; concern gives way to vacillation. Nevertheless, the government hopes to find a solution, because the monuments' crucial value to the economy has become evident.

The crisis was first publicized in 1977, in a series of articles in Cairo's *El Ahram* which inspired parliamentary debate. That same year the King Tut exhibition toured North America, producing \$13 million and a new tourist boom that revealed to Egyptians as nothing ever had before the moneymaking potential of the antiquities. "We realized that other countries had oil, we had the monuments—if we preserved them," says Zahi Hawass, an archaeologist who is the chief inspector at Giza. In 1979 the Second International Congress of Egyptology, at Grenoble, was addressed by Shehatta Adam, the chairman of Egypt's



EGYPT

THE FUTURE OF THE PAST

Egypt would like to solve its new archaeological crisis alone—but non-Egyptians have the expertise

IN 1960 EGYPTIAN officials realized that construction of the High Dam, although it would provide hydroelectric power and millions of new arable acres, would destroy some of the world's greatest antiquities. The twenty-year Nubian Salvage Campaign, which saved the most important treasures, came to symbolize the compromise possible between

social progress and historic preservation.

The problems solved by the campaign, however, were straightforward compared with others that have emerged. The creation of a huge artificial lake in one of the world's driest regions, and the expanded cultivation it allowed, have gradually made the climate more humid. The water table no longer fluctuates with the annual floods and has stabilized at a higher level than before the dam was built. These changes draw water-soluble salts to the surface of the stone monuments, where they crystallize and break off, destroying decorations. Within ten years of the dam's completion, in 1970, inscriptions on landmarks from Abu Simbel to Giza were being obliterated by strange pock-

antiquities department, which oversaw the activities of foreign excavators and their sponsoring institutions. He urged foreign missions to excavate or at least survey sites marked for agricultural, industrial, or urban development, especially in the Delta. But almost two years later a group of foreign archaeologists meeting in Cairo criticized the government for failing both to encourage surveying and to protect the monuments from industrial pollution, vandals, and even tourists, the carbon dioxide of whose breath was corroding paintings in the Theban tombs. The contradiction between the government's initial expression of alarm and its subsequent temporizing upset observers.

One major problem was that the antiquities department, although supposedly empowered to block projects that threaten antiquities, had few funds and was often overruled by more influential ministries. Not until 1980 were revenues from tourist sites reserved for the department, renamed the Egyptian Antiquities Organization, which today has more than \$25 million to finance Egyptian excavations and to help maintain museums and antiquities sites nationwide.

THE GOVERNMENT'S NEW concern for monuments is not shared by the general population. To most Egyptians the antiquities mean nothing; history begins for them with the arrival of Islam, in the seventh century. "The attitude of the Egyptian masses toward antiquities is like that of medieval Christians toward classical works of art; they find them offensive," says William Y. Adams, an archaeologist at the University of Kentucky who has worked at Nubian sites for twenty years. For nearly two centuries after the Napoleonic expedition Egyptians watched incuriously as Europeans and Americans carted off mummies, sphinxes, and scarabs. In Egypt, only the highly Westernized intelligentsia has ever cared about or collected antiquities.

After the 1952 revolution President Gamal Abdel Nasser declared all objects made before 1850 the property of the state, and the sale, exportation, and even possession of such artifacts became illegal. He "Egyptianized" the antiquities department, which had formerly been controlled by the French. Foreigners were still permitted to excavate in Egypt, but they worked under greater restraint and were required to turn over more of what they discovered.

Kamal el Mollakh, the cultural editor of *El Ahrām*, was working in the department at the time. "The 'Egyptianization' was inevitable and essential," he says. "But the department became just another bureaucracy. I had been working for old Frenchmen who were like monks; now I was working for officials. The monuments mattered less to them than office politics."

Nasser's law ended an informal nationwide system of collecting antiquities, in which peasants could sell for a few piasters objects they came upon in the fields; the objects eventually turned up in marketplaces from Alexandria to Aswan. "The system was primitive, but absolutely nothing was lost—not one tiny mummy bead," says Bernard Bothmer, a former curator of Egyptian art at the Brooklyn Museum. "Today, if a farmer finds something, he becomes nervous and just pitches it into the nearest canal. The loss has been incalculable for the history of Egypt."

Archaeologists could no longer carry most of their finds home; but this prohibition came to matter less during the sixties, as the objectives of archaeologists—especially Americans—grew increasingly theoretical. Botanists, geologists, and pollen specialists joined excavation teams. "People started digging for knowledge rather than mummies," says Michael A. Hoffman, who is an anthropologist and the project director at Hierakonpolis, a Predynastic site north of Aswan. Since 1967 an American team there has been studying the relationship between climatic changes and habitation patterns. Such scientists profess to have no interest in unearthing treasures like Tut's—which, of course, hold the greatest appeal for tourists and therefore for Egyptian officials.

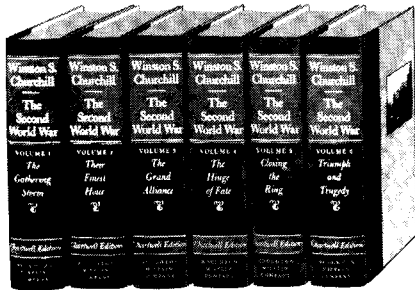
Although Nasser's restrictions did succeed in keeping works of art in Egypt, the land holds so much that within several years museum storage rooms were jammed with countless objects that had been found during excavations but had not been permanently registered. "Stuff got lost or disappeared," says Thomas Hoving, a former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Moreover, the new scarcity of Egyptian art on the international market increased its value, producing a wave of tomb and temple marauding. Hoving has proposed that Egypt follow England's example by creating a Board of Trade to determine which objects should be kept in the country and which may be sold. The

Egyptians see matters differently: not only do they want to keep what they have (there are plans to create twenty-five new regional museums by the end of the century) but they wish to recover what has been taken from the country to museums and private collections around the world. At a recent Smithsonian conference on the international preservation of antiquities, someone argued that Egyptian art was at least well cared for in foreign museums. Dr. Gamal Mokhtar, a former director of the antiquities department, replied, "Madam, if you were very poor and your child was kidnapped by a wealthy family, would the knowledge that it was well cared for prevent you from wanting it back?"

During his directorship, from 1968 to 1977, Dr. Mokhtar was often frustrated by the indifference to preservation shown by other ministers and even by President Anwar el Sadat, who, according to Mokhtar, was less interested in the antiquities than in the fascination they held for foreigners. When French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing asked to display the mummy of Ramses II in the Louvre, Sadat agreed, over Mokhtar's protests that Islamic law prohibits such exhibition of the dead. (The French eventually withdrew the request for the show, but they gained permission to bring the mummy to Paris for examination, after they assured Sadat that they would treat the mummy as a living king; it was transported in a military plane and greeted at the airport by the French minister of education and the Garde Républicaine.)

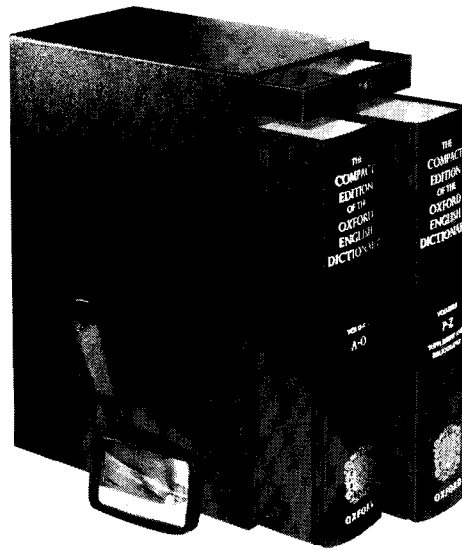
Sadat frequently used a guesthouse at Giza that had a commanding view of the Pyramids. He permitted a French construction company to start a resort development called Oasis of the Pyramids; rich Cairo residents were soon having homes built near Sadat's, on property that had long been designated an antiquities site. Construction was often begun at night under tents, to avoid detection by the local site inspectors. The antiquities department initiated legal action, and after requests from Mokhtar and others, Sadat ordered the development terminated. Mokhtar admits that today, for every development project that is blocked, many are not, and a larger number do not even come under review. In the Fayum, an oasis southwest of Cairo, the ancient city of Crocodilopolis was recently leveled for apartment complexes, and museum-quality statues were left broken by the roadside.

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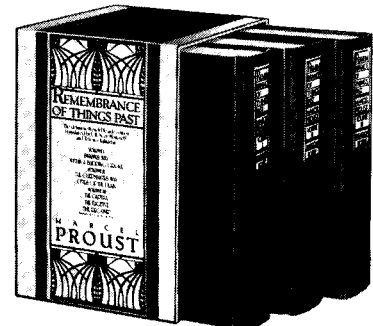
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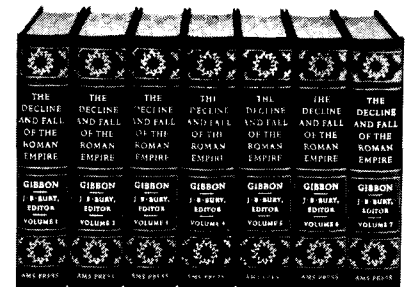
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Housing is a critical problem for the Egyptians, especially near Cairo, a city that was built for 500,000 inhabitants and is now home to 14 million. "We stopped a proposed apartment complex in a village near the ancient capital of Memphis, outside of Cairo," Gamal Mokhtar says. "Four thousand people were living in that village. Today there are forty thousand. Can we ask people to live ten to a room to preserve antiquities? But what happens if we bend the law for that village, when there are so many others in the same situation?"

THE CURRENT CHAIRMAN of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization is Dr. Ahmed Kadry, a former fighter pilot who holds advanced degrees in Islamic art and Egyptology. After twenty-one months in the position he has impressed foreigners, who are struck by his fair-mindedness in balancing the concerns of developers and preservationists. His job is formidable: he is responsible for overseeing the activities of about a hundred excavation teams—some forty Egyptian and sixty foreign—and the caretaking of 10,000 antiquities sites. His first priority, he says, is to initiate the restoration of damaged monuments and the recording of threatened sites wherever possible. "Unless something is done immediately, we are going to have a very serious problem within thirty years," he says. He resents it when foreigners press their own conservation strategies on the department. "This is a *national* problem," he says. "Of course, no one will help us unless we are helping ourselves."

Kadry's admirers often express the hope that he will last in the job. His cooperative attitude toward Europeans and Americans is conspicuous in Cairo, where Egyptians speak disdainfully of Sadat's flirtation with the West. According to the director of one European mission, "The mood has been strongly nationalistic since [President Hosni] Mubarak came to power, and there is more talk of 'Egyptianizing' things than at any other time since Nasser's day. Kadry is under constant pressure to get foreigners out." He will probably withstand that pressure. Most foreigners agree, however, that the Antiquities Organization has become much firmer in requiring concessions from them—ask-

ing, for instance, that a mission restore an Islamic monument in return for obtaining a choice desert excavation site. Most of the Moslem monuments are in Cairo, the best-preserved Islamic city in the world, and are in imminent danger of destruction; their fate is a major concern of Kadry's.

Although Kadry may have more autonomy than his predecessors, he is as powerless as they were in dealing with one problem: the army. All the antiquities sites but the major tourist attractions were closed for security reasons from 1970 to 1977, when the military built many new installations, often on those sites. Army bases were constructed near pyramids at Giza and Sakkara. "Egyptians know the Israelis will go a long way not to hit a pyramid," one German archaeologist says.

In Israel archaeology is a national pastime, reinforcing the Jews' historical claim to the land. Every army unit has an archaeologist of field rank. When the Israelis prepared to build new bases to replace those lost after the return of the Sinai, the army ordered surveys of contemplated locations. "If there was a mound where they wanted a runway, the mound usually went, but at least they recorded what was to be destroyed," says James Weinstein, of Cornell University, an archaeologist and a specialist in ancient international relations.

Many of the Egyptian bases occupy remote desert areas near the fragile remains of prehistoric settlements. Virtually nothing was known about Egyptian prehistory until 1962, when Dr. Fred Wendorf, the Henderson Professor of Prehistory at Southern Methodist University, began a series of excavations. Dr. Wendorf predicts that within the next fifteen years almost all the prehistoric sites on the fringes of the Nile Valley will be destroyed. "Only truly unique sites are safe from reclamation for agriculture or development. Egyptians have no interest in prehistory," he says. "For one thing, their archaeologists, and Egyptologists in general, are trained in traditional methods of fieldwork, whereas prehistoric work is heavily scientific, focusing on geology and statistics. We have been able to train only one Egyptian."

The education of Egyptian archaeologists is a sensitive subject. The country has six universities where students can study archaeology, but the curriculum emphasizes Egyptology—the study of language, literature, history, and reli-

gion—rather than the scientific techniques of modern fieldwork. "Most Egyptians are still excavating *Raiders of the Lost Ark*-style," says Zahi Hawass, who is doing research at the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania. "I have been on digs where I could see that people were very nervous because an Egyptian was working with them." Foreign archaeologists seem to collect anecdotes about Egyptians bungling excavations. These usually describe how a team disregarded or inadvertently destroyed post-pharaonic objects in their haste to get at more-conventional antiquities. One story that is often told concerns a team that discovered a Middle Kingdom tomb with an antechamber full of Roman mummies. The Egyptians laid planks over the mummies, crushing most of them, in order to advance to the interior of the tomb.

Zahi Hawass has suggested that Egypt create a special university of archaeology and initially have international guest professorships. But Dr. Gerhard Haeny, the director of the Swiss Institute for Egyptian Architecture and Archaeological Studies, in Cairo, says, "Many offers have been made to provide visiting scholars, but right now the universities do not want foreigners on their faculties. The best we can do—and we all should have done more of it—is to train Egyptians on our excavations."

A European mission is usually affiliated with its government's ministry of culture, education, or foreign affairs. Its budget represents a fixed percentage of its ministry's, and missions can offer government scholarships to Egyptians to study archaeology at European universities. The Americans are free agents and can make no such offers. (The Agency for International Development has a Fellowships for Peace program, but although about 2,000 Egyptians are students in the United States, only one is studying archaeology.)

Virtually all American projects are coordinated by the American Research Center in Egypt, a private organization. "Right now it is probably just as well that the Americans are not official representatives of our government, which is extremely unpopular," says the center's former director, Dr. Robert Wenke. Nonetheless, the American contingent's independent status renders it among the poorest in Egypt. "I envy even the Czechs and Poles," says Peter Lacovara, a young archaeologist from the Boston

Rhapsody in blue.

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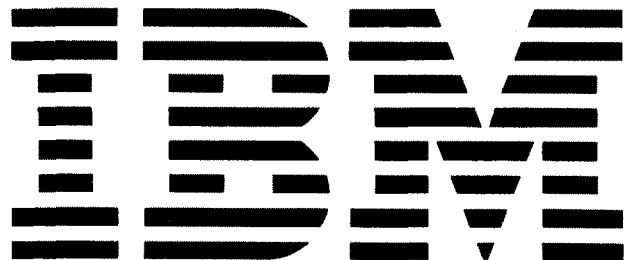
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Museum of Fine Arts, who with less than seven thousand dollars has single-handedly surveyed Deir el Ballas, one of the few ancient villages ever formally studied in Egypt.

LIMITED RESOURCES PLACE Americans at a peculiar disadvantage in Egypt's current preservation and restoration campaign. Typically, an American project is a three-month excavation, which might cost about \$50,000, according to Dr. Wenke. "Restoring a minor monument can require \$200,000 a year and take several years. A European can go to his ministry and say, 'Look, we've been digging in Egypt for over a century. We owe it to the Egyptians to restore this mosque.' Americans have nowhere like that to go."

The Egyptians have established a new policy, not yet strictly enforced, requiring a mission that receives permission to excavate in Upper Egypt to take a site in the threatened Delta as well. But unlike the desert, the Delta terrain demands stratified excavating; archaeologists may need several seasons to turn up anything at all. The work requires time and money that American teams do not have; only one American project is active in the Delta today.

To make matters worse, the most important source of American funding is about to disappear. Until now, about 75 percent of all American archaeological work in Egypt has been funded indirectly under the Agricultural Trade and Development Act of 1954 (P.L. 480). This "Food for Peace" program allowed Egypt to borrow dollars for the purchase of grain and to repay the loan in Egyptian pounds. The pounds were deposited in Egyptian banks and used by the United States for economic and cultural development projects in Egypt; the Smithsonian Institution administered the portion of the funds used for archaeology. In 1971 the law was revised, and in most cases Egypt was required to repay future loans in dollars. The remaining pounds will run out this spring.

The most promising alternative funding sources are not likely to finance the sorts of projects that would most please the Egyptians. The National Science Foundation, for instance, funds only what it considers to be scientific research, and that does not include traditional digs or conservation. An applicant must have a testable theory—about population, say, or economic pressures—that he or she wants to substanti-

ate. "You'll never get money from NSF to go find fifty-four alabaster pots," Dr. Wenke says.

Corporations are increasing their donations, but these do not provide a steady funding base. American archaeologists are looking to the U.S. government and hoping that a domestic policy will be enforced in Egypt as well: when the construction of a federally funded road or bridge might threaten a cultural resource, money is reserved for archaeological work. Archaeologists want this practice adopted for the many construction projects in Egypt sponsored by the Agency for International Development. They invoke the National Historical Preservation Act and the National Environmental Protection Act, which require the United States to cooperate with other countries in the protection of their cultural resources. Not everyone is optimistic. "Trying to get AID interested in archaeology is like trying to pull teeth from a hummingbird," Dr. Wendorf says. Of special concern now is a proposed road from Cairo to Asyut, which would be built with AID money and would go through one of the richest deposits of archaeological remains in the world. M. Peter McPherson, the administrator of AID, says that although environmental-impact studies will be conducted, there are no current plans to apply U.S. domestic conservation policy to Egypt.

HOWEVER SCARCE FUNDING may become, Americans have already made invaluable advances in three major areas of preservation: recording endangered monuments, surveying, and conserving stone. Over more than sixty years the Epigraphic Survey, conducted by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, has produced thousands of facsimile drawings of decorations and inscriptions on the monuments, especially in the ancient city of Thebes. As the deterioration of the monuments has accelerated, the survey team has stepped up its efforts. "We have copied so many things you would never believe had ever been there when you look at the walls now," says Dr. Janet H. Johnson, an archaeologist and the director of the Oriental Institute. "The damage is severe and getting worse." The survey has been funded heavily with P.L. 480 money, and the Institute is now looking for alternative sponsorship.

Another conservationist at Thebes is Dr. Kent Weeks, a professor of anthro-

pology at the American University in Cairo. For six years he has been mapping the necropolis with hot-air balloons, computers, and lasers that survey in seconds what used to take days. His project, at once romantic and technological, has attracted private, public, and corporate grants. And Egyptians are considering using his techniques in the Delta.

Over the years Weeks has observed the steady exfoliation of stone caused by the presence of salt. "You can treat an individual stone, chemically and at great expense, but what do you do about a mountain?" he asks. Dr. K. Lal Gauri, a geologist at the University of Louisville, believes that he has the answer: a vacuum salt-extraction process, which relies on water alone and costs next to nothing. He devised the procedure after a trip to Egypt that was financed by a grant from the American Research Center in Egypt. Three years ago the antiquities department expressed great interest in the process, but he has not heard from the organization again. "I'm still hoping the Egyptian government will approach me," he says. "Meanwhile, they are losing so much so quickly to the salt; it is a great shame."

EGYPTIANS WISH THAT there were no conservation problems—or that they could solve their own problems. When they are confronted with the necessity of choosing between an ancient past, which matters more to others than it does to them, and the future, they often seek stopgap measures rather than solutions.

In 1983, amid growing concern over the drastic erosion of the Sphinx, someone suggested that reattaching its beard—fragments of which were discovered over a century ago—would at least protect the statue's face and chest. The proposal was controversial. Historians pointed out that the beard dates from the New Kingdom and thus was a late addition to the monument. The site inspector at Giza said, "The world knows the Sphinx without a beard. We cannot offend the eyes of the world." But the most cogent objection was raised by geologists, who protested that the Sphinx's gravest problem came not from outside but from moisture within the stone—a result of the rising water table and, it appeared, of sewage that seeped from a nearby village. An archaeologist offered to put a harmless dye in the town's water supply to see whether the tinted water

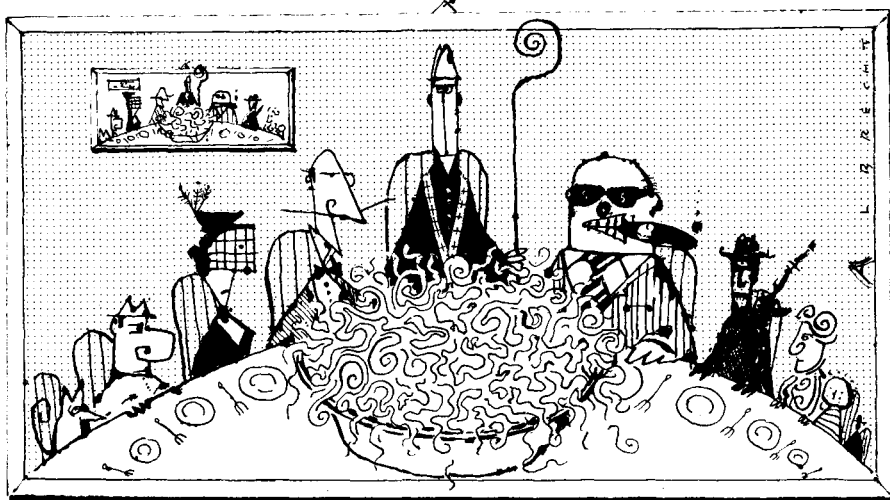
surfaced beneath the Sphinx, but the government rejected the offer. "They both do and do not want to know what the real problem is," Zahi Hawass says. "They do not wish to be criticized if an explanation is found but nothing is then done."

Egypt is so rich in antiquities that there will always be wonders enough for visitors and scholars. Egyptians have an unenviable job safeguarding what archaeologists like to call the world's patrimony. "Our responsibility is unimaginable," Dr. Kadry says. "The entire

country is an underground museum." According to Kamal el Mallakh, the challenge is even more complex: "Egypt is an underground museum beneath a museum beneath a museum." It is a problematic foundation on which to build a new society, and great treasures are going to be lost. How many, and how quickly, are the only riddles being asked at Giza these days.

—Katie Leishman

Katie Leishman is the articles editor of Working Mother and a freelance writer.



ITALY TURIN, CITY OF PROPHECY

*On rule by
robots, aristocrats,
and a Communist mayor*

ONCE, IN 1980, I traveled to Turin from Paris on an overnight sleeper—a real *wagon-lit*, painted the traditional sky-blue (and not one of those recent “couchettes,” in which tourists are packed for a sleepless night). It was toward the end of winter; in Modane, at the Italian border, it was still dark. I sat on my bed with the curtain up as the train climbed through the Alps in a driving snow. A solitary farmhouse on the mountainside showed a lit window, lost in the empty landscape. Then the train started the descent into the Piedmont plain and picked up speed; within minutes the snow had changed to rain, a web of lights shone below us, and, next,

the tracks ran alongside the wet, gleaming, and silent streets of the Turin suburbs.

Turin is oriented toward Rome, and half its people now are from the Italian mainland south of Naples and from Sicily, yet the city is also dark and dank, and it looks part French, or even Central European. It sits so close to its somber mountains that in 1943 the Turin partisans could exchange fire with German patrols in the center of town and escape on foot to their Alpine caves before nightfall. An arrival by train places a city.

Here is another way to place Turin: it lies 146 miles east-southeast of Lyons as the crow flies, if a crow can fly over those ten-thousand-foot Alps. Lyons and Turin form an isosceles triangle with Prague at the top. This odd bit of information is fraught with meaning for the very many Turinese who in the summer of 1984 were into magic. When I arrived there last May, after a bumpy plane ride this time, magic turned out to have become a local dinner topic, and the “white triangle” that Turin forms with Prague and Lyons had become a tool for predictions. I was told that the triangle was founded on a “basic identity” of the

big rivers of the three cities and on the hidden symbolism in the sculpture of their cathedrals.

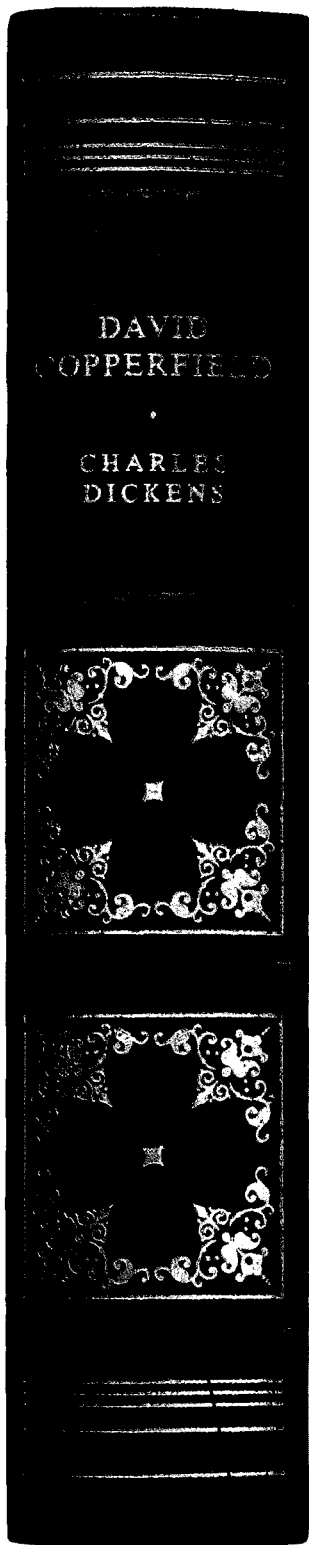
Turin’s thaumaturgy goes back at least as far as Nostradamus, who, when he was living in Turin, drew up a “black triangle” within the city and used it to predict that the next-to-last pope in history would rule for some thirty days. This prediction is uncomfortable for our nuclear-weapons age, since John Paul I, the present pope’s predecessor, died on the thirty-third day of his reign.

In the four years since my visit in 1980 militant Fiat workers and rebellious university students had vanished from the streets. What had happened? A plague of unemployment—hopeless, long-term unemployment—had hit Turin and subdued them. Hundreds of suspected militants and terrorists had simply been locked away without trial. In this new atmosphere men who still had work turned inward. But right beside them a huge cottage industry had sprung up, such as Europe hadn’t seen since the Industrial Revolution—tens of thousands of new jobs that on paper did not even exist. To give one example, I crossed the Po and Dora rivers where they meet and I was in a small community, Settimo Torinese, where more than half of all the ballpoint pens used in Europe are made. This was “black” labor: no taxes are paid, no social regulations or minimum wages are honored, but the people were quite willing to show me into their apartments, where housewives and children were working around the table, and the color television was going full blast. A new Fiat Uno was parked out front. Turin had entered the post-industrial era.

This has long been a city of Meaning, and with a sour, puritanical streak. It has since 1899 been a factory city, the city of Fiat, one of the largest manufacturing enterprises east of the United States. It has been a Red city ever since the First World War, even through fascism, but in the thirties a man still couldn’t board a streetcar if he wasn’t wearing a jacket. The Red Fiat workers did wear jackets, and ties, and to the peasant soldiers who were sent in to break their strikes they looked like gentry. A city councillor gave me a quote from Marx on Paris: “Nothing ever changes there, but *if* something changes, it changes history.” “That goes equally for Turin,” he said with a grim kind of satisfaction.

Turin is a square place, literally, with streets perpendicular to each other, as in

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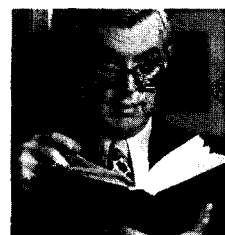
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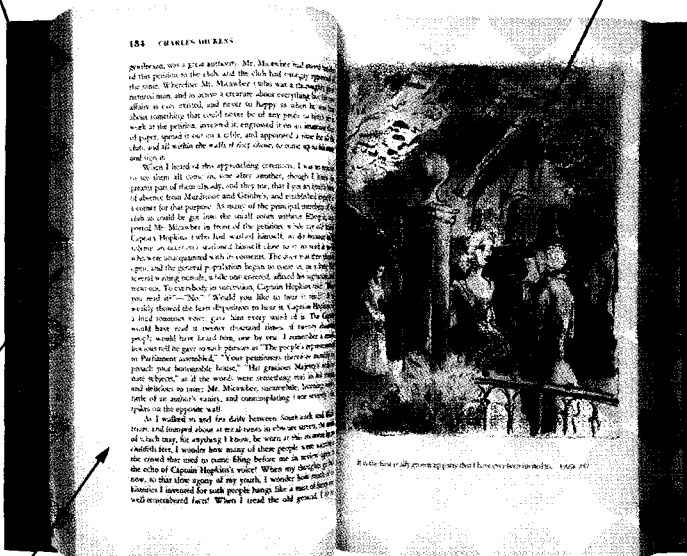
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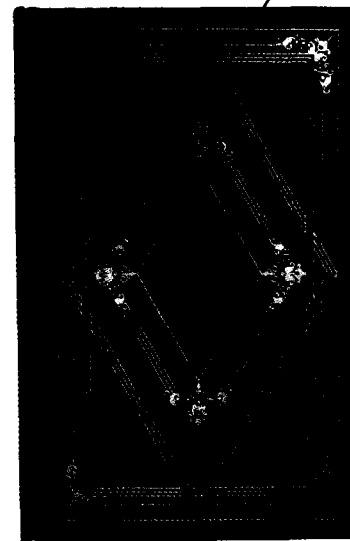
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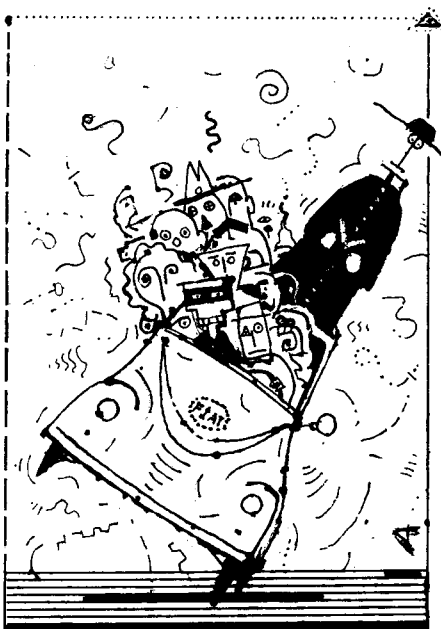


Manhattan; the Romans built their Augusta Taurinorum that way 2,000 years ago, and the locals have stayed with it. The city is baroque, having more or less skipped the Renaissance, and it has dramatic perspectives of bridges, arcaded streets, and piazzas. Those piazzas are open and enclosed at the same time. Standing in their centers, you have buildings—in fact, palaces—all around you in one continuous façade, yet the streets go right through those buildings, through gateways between rows of columns. That way the dukes of Savoy and, later, the first king of Italy, who established his capital here in 1860, could take their walks without ever exposing their heads to the open sky. It is an architecture that in the Italian south gives protection against the *solleone*, the lion sun; in Turin, in that Central European mountain wind, it makes most days even grayer and chillier. Maybe it is worth it: it has grandeur. Those piazzas are made for politics. They don't smell just of car fumes, they also smell of great causes, and of assassinations. Camillo Count Cavour established the Kingdom of Italy here, Antonio Gramsci the Italian Communist Party, and now Giovanni Agnelli the automated factory that will, through the eighties, shed three or four percent of its work force each year.

I know Agnelli. In the late sixties we had lunch at his villa in the Turin hills; in 1980, during the great confrontation between Fiat (his family concern) and the unions—the *confittualità permanente* (something like “permanent conflicting”), as they called it then—I met him in a New York sauna and asked him if he would move his enterprise to Brazil or South Korea as a final maneuver of that war. “Fiat will always be an Italian company,” he answered. Now I sat across from him in his office on the eighth floor of the Fiat Building, on Corso Marconi. His office was large, red-carpeted, and beautifully furnished, as one would expect in a country where telephones, chairs, and desks are designed with a love and artistry that were once devoted to frescoes. “Still true,” he said. “We remain Italian.” Fiat had beaten the unions and had fired some 50,000 people since 1980. “We had no other option,” Agnelli said. “If we weren't competitive, we'd go under. We have to show a profit. We are now into our second generation of robots. It's a process that can't be turned around.”

The word “fired” isn't actually used in this age of euphemisms; those men and

women were “suspended.” They were absorbed into the *cassintegrati*, a welfare category; the state goes on paying a large part of their wages for a varying number of years. But that hasn't been enough, of course, and a number of the *cassintegrati* have killed themselves—a thousand since 1981, when the mass suspensions began. A lawyer, Francesco Caterina, prepared a detailed and documented report about this and sent it to the Turin newspapers, but none of them published it. *La Stampa*, Turin's major morning paper (it is owned by the Agnellis), said that it knew of only four or five cases. Turin is like Detroit or Pittsburgh in the bitterness of life when one has been declared useless; you see the *cassintegrati* hanging around at the



Porta Palazzo, the open-air market, where they spend two hours buying three tomatoes and a sausage, skilled workers, about whom an editorial proudly said only a few years ago (in a publication of the FLM, the general trade union), “The factory is their city, a great collective in which all of Italy is represented, a collective security and conscience, knit together by the union.”

In Naples, I'm told, it is easier to be a *cassintegrato*, if only because of the climate. Turin is too cold, and for all its churches full of saints indeed too Calvinistic, too proud of its tradition of craftsmanship. That tradition, going back to the armorers and carriage builders of the ducal court of Savoy, was the very reason that the car industry started here and nowhere else, and was in the process of being absorbed by the

600,000 southern peasants who came after 1960 to find jobs, mostly with Fiat. Some of them have now started trickling back to their arid plots of farmland.

I went to see the Fiat robots. They don't look in the least like people (why would they?), but they have human-like, searching gestures, the opposite of what we think of when we speak of machine-like movements. They have already almost doubled Fiat's productivity per human being employed. Some \$6 billion is going to be spent here in the next three years for more of them.

The old Turinese bourgeoisie and aristocracy, people who call themselves Piedmontese first and Italians second, whose parents often spoke French or a kind of Provençal patois at home, are now going to share their city with these shiny robots. Most Turinese hated the influx of southerners and accused them of all the vices that immigrants are accused of by the first-come. Old-line Turinese resented the workers' visible poverty and their loud voices, and blamed them for the fact that Fiat had jobs for them but no housing. The southerners were lonely men, and in their wake came peasant-woman prostitutes of surprising ugliness and ripe age, who used to hang around the Porta Nuova railroad station muttering their going rates. Two dollars or so would do it. Now wives and families have followed the men up north, and southerners have married (mostly other southerners). Eventually the southerners, those who have a reason for staying and ways to stay, must blend in. A second generation has already emerged—much taller, because of having been better fed, and speaking an Italian a born Turinese can understand. The robots, who need neither housing nor sex, and who remain off the streets, will turn out to be the greater threat to the stability of city life.

THE ARISTOCRACY OF Turin is an invisible presence, but it is perhaps taken a bit more seriously than that of Rome, where titles are used to sell designer clothes. The Italian republic has, of course, abolished all the legal reality of those little crowns on visiting cards, but in Turin they remain an emotional link with a history-book past, when the House of Savoy was a power and Turin was the seat first of a duchy and then of a monarchy. The aristocrats of Turin have a circle—an “English club,” it is called here—but no one seemed to know its name or whereabouts.

Once I had found out (from the owner of the Luxemburg, the nicest local bookstore) that this club was in the Palazzo Solaro del Borgo, in the Piazza San Carlo, it was easy to take a letter there, and the next day I was received by one of its directors—Carlo Serra, a retired general. The palace, like the square it is in, was designed in the seventeenth century by Carlo di Castellamonte, whose hand as an architect is everywhere in the old town. San Carlo is a lovely square, very wide, with low and uninterrupted façades on its east and west sides. They are painted in that luminous ocher which is a secret of Spanish and Italian cities, with the shutters in white. The palace itself is the worse for wear, but its rooms have walls of inlaid woods and silk hangings, and domed ceilings with gilded trellises.

General Serra and I had our coffee in the *foresteria*, the room for guests (in Italy a stranger is called a *forestiere*, a man from the forest), and he took care to lead me right up to the threshold of the members' dining room but no farther. We did enter the library, which holds a complete set of the famous Paris magazine *Revue des Deux Mondes*, from its beginning, in 1829, to the present. No member had ever asked for a copy, though, the General said ruefully. The vast room for guests was dimly lit by some standing lamps; its windows were blocked a hundred years ago when a private concert hall was built on the terrace in front of it. At that time, the palace housed the Accademia Filarmonica, a club of professional men who provided musical education for deserving poor boys. In 1848 Count Cavour had started the Società del Whist in the nearby Piazza Castello, so that he and his fellow noblemen could play cards. The two later merged under the name Società del Whist Accademia Filarmonica.

"We do not look for titles anymore among our members," the General said. "Nor, indeed, for eminence. All we want is gentlemen. Well-to-do gentlemen. We are a circle of *friends*. Friendship is the most important thing to me, and to this city. This is a city of friendships, a city still *à la mesure de l'homme*—to the measure of man. Rome isn't, Milan isn't. I can walk Turin from end to end. Know where I am. Meet my friends."

The General went on, "We don't want men here who get excited, who hold forth, shouters. We are not excited about things, we do not talk politics here, we want to stay on the outside, be

quiet." (The General did get excited for a moment, when we inadvertently touched upon Diego Novelli, the Communist—but very quiet and conservative—ex-newspaper editor, now mayor of the city.) His one theme was that here was a circle of friends and nothing more, nothing conspiratorial. Later I heard on several occasions that those Whist members were all monarchists and dangerous neo-fascists, and a woman who had visited the house of one of them told me that framed front pages of Mussolini's newspaper, *Popolo d'Italia*, covered its walls. Actually, a certain police-state cast of mind *is* making inroads into Italian public life; for example, Italians may now be held in prison without trial for up to nine years. Still, if something like fascism took root here again, it would surely not be through retired generals calling the populace out into the streets under the banners of the past. Anyway, General Serra had my sympathy, if only because of the first thing he had said to me: "I'm in charge of the dishes at this club and of the furniture, simple things. Generals, as you must know, are not very intelligent."

MANY ITALIAN CITIES have Communist mayors. The mayors have a good record of keeping their hands clean, and Diego Novelli was untouched by a recent bribery scandal in the Turin city council. He is a neat and elegant-looking man, and his Palazzo di Città (City Hall, but it loses in translation) has the same kind of allure as the palace of the Whist Society. Novelli's office looks very much like the room where General Serra received me, but it is in better repair and it has an electric door lock operated by the Mayor from his desk. I asked Novelli if he wasn't perhaps betraying the Revolution by helping to patch up such a citadel of capitalism as Turin. The question annoyed him, but then he said with a smile, "No one can accuse me of betraying the lady; I never lived with her." In Italian that was a pun, for the word he used, *tradire*, means both "to betray" and "to be unfaithful to." Novelli's Turin has built schools, and parks for children, but housing remains a formidable problem: there are 25,000 empty apartments, but the owners refuse to rent them out; they want to sell only, and the city has no power to do anything about that. Novelli said, "To be a revolutionary in Turin is to restore the human quality of life. People must know their neighbors. Streets must be

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more than racetracks." He didn't use General Serra's phrase about the city's being *à la mesure de l'homme*, but he meant the same. It was peculiar to hear those two men, so immeasurably—indeed, hopelessly—apart, utter similar thoughts under similar gilded ceilings out of their common past.

Beyond the special world of politics Turin is a city of self-assured wealth, lying within the "golden circle" of Monte Carlo, Geneva, Saint-Moritz, and Portofino. This year's Castellamontes and Alfieris are building banks, and villas in the hills, and designing store windows. The arcades of Via Roma have their stunning shops, with displays of shoes, handbags, wallets, belts; leather is the major tribal marking here, showing who is *figo*, "with it"; its quality, shape, and colors have a refinement I have never seen elsewhere. Those sensual shop windows continue along the sides of the Piazza San Carlo and into Lagrange and Accademia delle Scienze, parallel streets that meet, more or less, at the Cambio, a restaurant where the linens are more gleamingly blanché, the roses redder, the food served with more grace than even in Ledoyen, behind the trees of the Rond-Point des Champs-Élysées. It is the setting of a society in which the styles of eating, dressing, behaving, are treated too earnestly to label it "dolce," but one with an amazing feeling for beauty and taste.

That society's members build their houses in the Turin hills, across the Po. No need for them to escape their fellow men and women by ramshackle commuter railroad. A ten-minute car ride takes them to their homes, from which they, like the barons of old, can look down upon their fiefs. Theirs are pleasurable houses on the high right bank of the river, and they are designed for a privacy Americans rarely seek. Through the entrance gates, framed by cypresses and wild olives, nothing is visible or disclosed but bits of white driveway, with Dobermans and German shepherds ready to defend it all.

AT THE BOTTOM end of Turin's social scale are the city housing developments, such as Le Vallette and E-6. These aren't slums. Turin has no slums of the sort found in Naples, Brooklyn, or the Bronx. "We'll never build another E-6, though," Novelli said to me, "People must not live that way." E-6, nineteen tower blocks in the northwest corner of the city, went up more than a

decade ago. It was built for southern workers, and of the 1,800 families now in the towers only three are native Turinese. When I said I'd visit it, Novelli gave me the name of its local church and its priest, Don Canavesio, who would be a good guide to the place.

I got to E-6 on a number 72 city bus, making use of a vast urban service that Novelli had promised and delivered. I found a group of buildings in an expanse of brown grass; in the middle was a low-flung modern church, where Don Canavesio was ensconced behind high fences and locked gates. He showed me his church, which looked like a YMCA meeting hall, with folding chairs and a white stone crucifix on the wall. He wasn't going to do any "southern tricks" for his parishioners, he informed me. There weren't many of these. Only four percent of the families came to mass.

I went with him on a visit to one of the towers. The bells in the lobby had been ripped out, there was no light, and only one elevator was working. "The kids do this," the priest said. "They just break things, they cut trees, they bend my gates. I don't understand it. Why?"

He was nervous as we went up in the one elevator, which was dark. But in answer to a question of mine he said no, he didn't feel antagonistic toward these people; he loved them. We were going to visit the apartment of what he called "a good couple," Sicilians. The woman who opened the door was young and thin, but, he had told me, she already had six children. They were all in school except for a little girl who was home a bit sick; she was helping her mother fold the laundry, and was visibly having a lovely morning, safe and secure and alone with her mom. The mother, over our protests, went to the kitchen to prepare coffee. "Our school is doing better," the priest said to me. "They've got a new program now, with extra teachers, developing a better relationship with these children, helping them to be long."

The woman of the place came to Turin in 1966 and got into E-6 in 1979. Her husband did street-repair work and averaged the equivalent of \$600 a month in summer, but when the weather was bad and he couldn't work, he made nothing. The rent was less than a hundred dollars a month. After the couple had spent years on the waiting list, living with their children in one room, the accountant of the street-repair firm had made one phone call for them, and now they lived

in E-6, with three rooms, a balcony, a kitchen, and central heating (expensive and extra). "You should have asked me before," the accountant had said. "Waiting lists are a joke."

"I started working at the age of seven," the Sicilian woman said. "I was a housemaid, in Palermo. When I got to Turin, in 1966, I was going to get a job in a factory, a real job. I couldn't. I ended up a maid again. I married my brother-in-law's brother. They had come here first. When the kids are all in school, I go out cleaning." She talked fast, and was appealing, perhaps beautiful, behind her pile of laundry, with her little daughter peering at me over the ironing board.

"My husband is jealous," she said. "I know no one. We're not even speaking with our family anymore. He is a good man, but he doesn't want to go dancing, anything."

Would she want to go back south one day?

"I was worse off in Sicily," she told me. "Turin is my country now. But I wonder and ask myself, Are things meant to be so sad here?" Her speech was hard to follow, and Don Canavesio repeated those words of hers for me in French; if he felt any reaction to them, his face didn't show it.

When he and I were back outside, we saw a group of boys playing ball, and the priest went over to ask why they weren't in school. As I was standing there waiting for him, on that ugly field of bare earth and dead grass with the virginal white of the Alps at the horizon, the little daughter of the Sicilian came running from the tower building. She held out a pencil and a page torn from a school notebook and asked me something I did not understand. I appealed to the priest for interpretation.

He listened and frowned. "The woman wants you to give her your name and address."

"Of course," I said, and took the paper and pencil. "Why does she?"

More muttering from the little girl.

"We explained to her how you're here to study the city," he told me. "Now, she says, she must write down the story of her unhappy life, and send it to you."

Her letter never came. I wonder, Did she feel too hopeless? Did her husband tear up her story?

—Hans Koning

Hans Koning is a novelist and political writer. His forthcoming novel is *Acts of Faith*.

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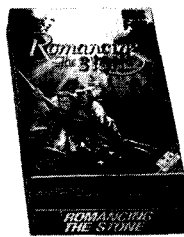
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GETTING ALONG WITH THE RUSSIANS

BY PATRICIA MARX

THE RUSSIANS have come under attack lately for wanting to blow up the world. This is unfair. Before we can criticize the Russians, we must understand their point of view. So many times in life there are two equally valid ways to approach a problem. The French, for example, roast a turkey, seasoned with a hint of salt, in a 450-degree oven, basting frequently, perhaps with peach preserves, until it turns a golden brown. The English, on the other hand, prefer to wrap the turkey in foil and cook it all day in a slow oven. No mention of salt or peach preserves is made. Yet we cannot say the English method is "right" and the French method "wrong." Similarly, we cannot say that our interest in peace is superior to the Russians' interest in war.

Why do the Russians want to kill us? Psychologists tell us that the Russians want to bomb us because they really seek our approval. The Russians are very fond of foreigners. Catherine the Great so admired the French that she tried to change the name of Saint Petersburg to Chez Moi. And one need only remember the beautiful and costly Russian pavilion at Expo '67—where visitors were allowed to touch the bears—to know how eager the Russians are to please. Though bombing us seems an inappropriate means to that end, it is supremely flattering. Other experts, noting that the Russians' strength lies in the military and not in the arts, remind us that it is natural to want to do what you do best.

Why haven't the Russians acted already? No one knows. Perhaps they are waiting for the right moment. Or perhaps they don't have enough time. There are a million and one things to do in a day, and sometimes even the most minor—trying to figure out whether you should use the “rug” or the “floor” attachment on the vacuum cleaner to clean a rubber welcome mat—can take hours.

Patricia Marx is a co-author of How to Become a Virgin.



But sorry as we may be for the over-worked Russians, we must respond to their desire to destroy the world. We must respond, if not for the sake of mankind then for ourselves. Bottling up anger can be harmful, and eventually we will come to resent the Russians. This does not mean we need be vindictive. Two wrongs do not make a right, and supposing they did, we should not use this as an excuse to annoy the Russians. We still see them at cultural exchanges. Imagine how Andrei Gromyko felt after the Russians shot down the Korean jet and he had to attend a Thanksgiving jamboree with U.S. dignitaries. Should he have said he was sorry or would that have implied that he personally gave the orders to kill? Should he have skipped dessert?

Education, not force, is the effective way to change the Russians. If we want a three-year-old not to put his hand on a hot stove, we do not beat him unmercifully. Rather, we *teach* him that a stove is hot, by pressing his hand to the burner for a minute or two. And so we must teach the Russians. Why not distribute the works of Laurie Colwin (my favorite—*Happy All the Time*) in Russia? The Russian people will learn not only that totalitarianism is wrong and democracy is right but also that we are basically romantics who are not above poking fun at ourselves once in a while.

It is important that we not provoke the Russians. We should avoid pointing out how different Russia is from that festive little restaurant in New York, the Russian Tea Room. The Russians are very sensitive about this. Instead, let us compliment the Russians on their clever

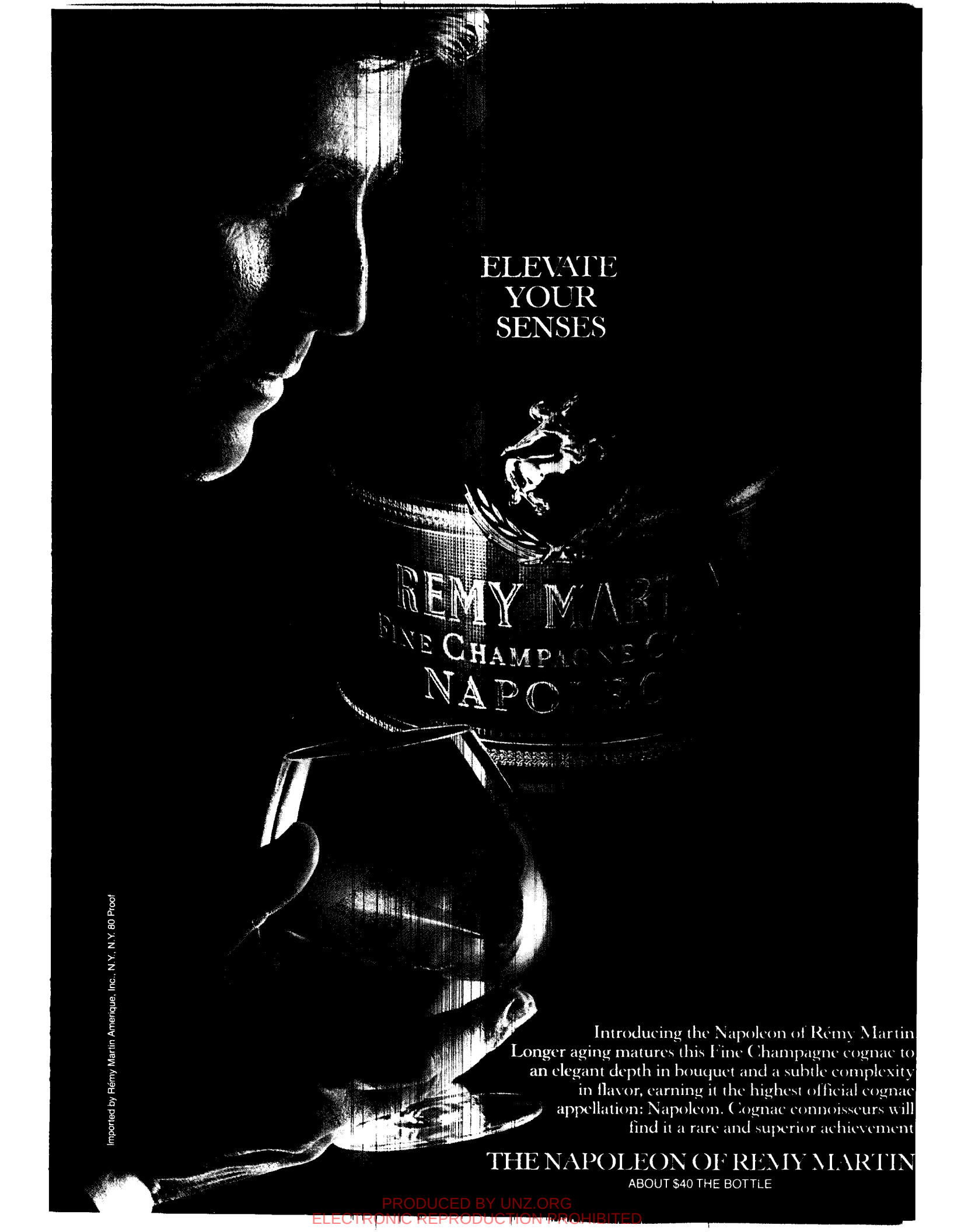
idea of making soup out of beets! Or tell them how much economic sense communism makes, with all those people living together, sharing rent, food, and utilities. Let's thank the Russians for letting us know months ahead that they planned to boycott the Olympics, sparing us the chore of making hospital corners on all those beds. Should politics come up, we might mention Ivan IV

(never call him Ivan the Terrible) and say how great it was that he was able to annex western Siberia.

If our discretion and cordiality are not reciprocated and the Russians refuse to call off their plans to destroy the world, stern measures are in order.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE

1. Continue to send the Russians wheat, but package it in cartons filled with so many Styrofoam pellets that Russia becomes a big mess.
2. Enroll every Soviet citizen in the Columbia Record Club. Each citizen will receive eleven record albums at one ruble, after which he or she will be legally obligated to buy eight albums at list price over the next three years. This will cost the Russians more than 20 billion rubles. Plus no Russian groups.
3. Give them the broken headsets at the UN.
4. Call up Konstantin Chernenko while he is boating and tell him that the next summit meeting is a come-as-you-are. Send everyone else normal invitations.
5. Send Cuba one Whitman's sampler every day so that the Cubans will like us more than the Russians. *Or* start a rumor that Cuba is giving up communism. When the Russians invade, they will be very embarrassed and will look stupid in the eyes of the world.
6. Rewrite history to show that the shroud of Turin was a Ukrainian shawl, proving that Jesus Christ was a Russian. Then write an article in *Pravda*, commenting, with wry wit, how Marxists supposedly don't believe in religion. □



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STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND

A moviegoer at the theater

BY DAVID DENBY

THE SHOW IS A HIT: AT THE DOOR SILVER-HAIRED gents and suave-looking women push at each other excitedly, eager to get in. For a moment you could be somewhere wonderful—at a concert, maybe, or a ball game. Thereafter all is misery. The first act is supposed to be long, so you head for the bathroom right away. Down a long stairway, past the bar, the john is amazingly clean, and the smell of ammonia sets off memories—not so much memories as waves of feeling—that are far from unpleasant. Shows that your parents took you to almost thirty years ago come flooding back. *The Pajama Game*. *The King and I*. Those theaters must have stunk of ammonia too . . . But why is the smell so *strong*? What demons of boredom are the janitors trying to drive out? Back upstairs you enter your row, where all the others, having carefully folded their minks and camel's hairs into their laps, must now unfold them and stand up for you. *Sorry, sorry*, you mutter, painfully squeezing by, which is worse, far worse—humiliating, almost, if the people are elderly—than brushing past sleeping drunks and sprawled-out kids in a neighborhood movie theater. Someone else straggles in, and everyone stands *again*. Settled at last, you try to concentrate on that gushy little magazine, with its talk of clothes and wine and glamorous first nights and Noel and Gertie and the Lunts (ah, the Lunts!), and voices drift into your ear: “ruptured bladder” . . . “three weeks at Maui” . . . “the nurses are very rude” . . . “I went to that *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. Not bad, but why did they have to use *whorehouse* in the title?” You’re in a Broadway theater, where at least part of the audience thinks that *whorehouse* is a dirty word.

The curtain rises at last. A man sits at a kitchen table on one side of a room, looking down at the table, doing nothing. Another man comes in. The first man looks up, then down again. Oh, no! They’re going to *talk*! Yikes! Get me out of here!

. . .

For years I’ve been avoiding the theater. I go to four or five movies a week, to the opera and to concerts as often as possible, to ballet once in a while, to clubs, rock concerts, drag queens in lofts—all that is fine. But going to the the-

ater—Broadway, Off-Broadway, Off-Off-Broadway, it doesn’t matter—is painful for me. I am not happy there. Yet I always feel guilty about going so rarely. Surely I’m missing something. Never mind pleasure, that isn’t likely, but surely I’m missing actors (Amanda Plummer? F. Murray Abraham?), playwrights (Lanford Wilson? David Mamet?), composers, and set designers whose work I need to see and hear. I’m a movie critic—how can I hate the theater? It’s almost unnatural. But every time I go, proud of my attention to duty, I feel awful. Something is wrong: I don’t seem to be getting it—the *experience*, the “electricity,” the “irreplaceable presence of the live actor,” that so many others love and need. The “distinguished” plays and musicals I’ve dragged myself to in recent years seemed clichéd, obvious, crude, or else intricate and clever in ways that I didn’t care about. They certainly “held the stage”—they held it by main force. But that shrewdness about theatrical craft had little to do with art, or at least little that I could see, and I resented the plays’ grip on me. I missed the cinema’s loose inclusiveness, the variety of life going on; I didn’t want my attention dominated by Peter Shaffer’s cast-iron banalities. And yet I couldn’t escape into the avant-garde, as many people weary of the commercial theater have. Ritual theater? Bodies swaying in massed lamentation? Chanting, frothing, “nonverbal” utterances? Performers throwing off clothes, breaking down the “space” between actor and audience? Late in the sixties, after the high-water mark of Peter Brook’s spectacular 1966 production of Peter Weiss’s *Marat/Sade*, the avant-garde theater became an exercise in spiritual purification that did more

for the actors than for the audience. You were supposed to be awed by these people who were so devoted to their art that they became gaunt and humorless and bug-eyed crazy. The avant-garde could turn anyone into a philistine.

Clearly, my problem is more serious than bad plays. And I’m not alone. I don’t know about the rest of the country, but in New York they are everywhere—the theaterphobes, the people who turn white with boredom when the new Stephen Sondheim musical is discussed at a dinner party. Typically they are roughly my age (forty-one) or



younger, and they are not completely ignorant. They love Shakespeare, Chekhov, late O'Neill, and also Gershwin, Porter, Rodgers & Hart, *Guys and Dolls*; they admire Ibsen, Strindberg, Shaw, and (with misgivings) Brecht; they might admire Molière, too, if one of the plays in Richard Wilbur's translation were given a great production. But the Greek dramatists have become a lecture-hall memory, and the difficult-to-translate Racine, a major figure in world literature, is no more than a name. Having been active theatergoers, many of them, in their college years, they continued to attend plays for a while as a cultural duty, but gradually they fell off, and now, in their years of dereliction, the indifference has hardened into hatred. They may go to the theater when in London, but at home their conviction is that Broadway is for tourists and relatives, Off-Broadway for pseudos. They rarely think about the theater, but if they were pushed to sum up their feelings, they might say, "The stage is the place for genius but not for talent"—an impossible attitude that would rightly enrage anyone humbly trying to put on a show, as well as anyone outside a big city who is hungry for theater. Their culture—my culture—is books, music, and movies, and their theater problem and mine exists at such a primitive level that I know how naive I must sound setting it down on paper.

To begin with, *we suffer from a kind of physical embarrassment at the spectacle of actors pretending they are not being watched*. Particularly when the actors are American. The British actor, schooled in a culture that conceives of social life as performance, is on easy terms with an audience, but the American, obsessed with authenticity, with the integrity of his soul, struggles to dredge up buried feelings, and is never more patently actorish than at the moment he reveals his innermost self. The British actor knows he's in a *play*; the American actor thinks he's getting at truth, and the pretense that we are not there as he strips himself naked can be unbearable. But this is only part of a larger problem. With all proportions kept, we are like the elderly Tolstoy who went to a performance of Wagner's *Siegfried* and saw only two men dressed as a dragon. We cannot suspend disbelief: everything that happens in the theater reminds us that the only thing real in that place is the actors standing on stage. How can anything be *represented* on a stage? The place for representation is the cinema.

Last winter and spring, after a long period of guilty abstinence, I went to a lot of plays. I wanted to see if I could stop squirming in the theater—or at least understand why I felt so uneasy. I didn't martyr myself: I skipped the latest "comeback" of the Living Theater troupe, the big splashy musicals (*Cats*, *La Cage aux folles*), and anything else I thought I would dislike. I went to the best plays I could find and kept a notebook, but everywhere I went my true home, the movies, kept calling to me.

David Denby reviewed movies for The Atlantic from 1970 to 1972. He is the film critic for New York magazine and has written for several other publications.

La Tragédie de Carmen

THE SNOB EVENT OF THE SEASON: PETER BROOK'S pared-down, eighty-two-minute version of Bizet's opera, with only four singing roles and three actors, and an orchestra of fifteen. It is modernism at its most sleek, austere, and chic, earlier a considerable hit in Paris, now tirelessly promoted here by *The New York Times*. My immediate response is that it just doesn't work—it's a mistake, a miscalculation. In interviews Brook and the writer, Jean-Claude Carrière, claim to have removed the "kitsch" from *Carmen* (the ensemble numbers, the choruses, the gypsy-smugglers' atmosphere) in a search for the core of the material. But *Carmen* isn't kitsch—for God's sake, even *Brahms* loved it, and Nietzsche saw it twenty times—and when you cut away everything but the core, what remains of Mérimée's original story feels like an outline. Dressing everyone in black, as if to raise the drama to timeless ritual, Brook produces a painful incongruity: the few arias of Bizet's that remain have a sweet plangency that no longer fits this "stark," dark-costumed fable of jealousy and murder. Now the *music* seems like a mistake. Why not throw all of it out? (That's what Jean-Luc Godard did when he made his modern-day version of the story, *First Name: Carmen*.) This *Carmen* needs music by the early Hans Werner Henze, or someone equally gloomy.

After an hour of this thing, which has less power than any routine performance of Bizet's opera, I turn away from the stage and look at the audience. A great feeling of unreality comes over me. Everyone presses forward in his seat, all attention, but I cannot suppress evil thoughts: How much of the French dialogue do they understand? Are they really involved, or struggling to *get* involved? From my seat, upstairs and around to the side of Lincoln Center's awkwardly designed Vivian Beaumont Theater, the actors' faces are impossible to see. I long for a close-up. I want to see everyone's eyes. The music—a quiet tinkling of flute, oboe, a single horn, gently struck timpani—isn't bringing anything closer. A long way away black-clad figures speaking French and occasionally singing the most familiar excerpts from a great opera are stalking, circling, intertwining . . . Sleep encloses me, and I dream of Risé Stevens clenching a rose in her teeth.

The Glass Menagerie

A MUCH AWAITED REVIVAL, DIRECTED BY JOHN DEXTER, of Tennessee Williams's beloved early play. Bruce Davison, playing Tom, walks onstage, lights a cigarette, and begins the opening narration ("Yes, I have tricks in my pocket, I have things up my sleeve"), and almost immediately my mind slips away. As Davison speaks, the words seem not so much about the grave and gentle matters of Williams's text—the play as memory, Tom's family, the Depression, the thirties—as about the possibilities of Bruce Davison's voice. As it turns out, his voice is pleasant in timbre, but he appears to be using the narra-

tion to show off everything that it can do, to demonstrate its tonalities—now affectionate, now ironic, now scornful or rueful. His voice has body, and Davison holds it in the air, turning it this way and that: it offers sweet complicity with the audience and then sternly turns away; it is full of characters and wit and expression, and after a few sentences I have no idea what it is saying except “Listen to me.”

But this happens all the time in the theater! The theater actor *produces* his voice, and with a mediocre actor that becomes the meaning of his performance. The theater is full of voices that sound like hi-fi speakers with the bass or treble turned up, of voices that are cracked, edged, serrated, terraced—driftwood and rusted steel, barrel organ and brine. Voices with character. And of these actors, with the possible exceptions of Jason Robards, Jr., and George C. Scott, not one can get very far in the movies with so attention-getting an instrument, for the simple reason that someone appearing in a movie must sound like a human being and not like an actor. (Charles Laughton, roaring and shaking his dewlaps, happily escaped this rule.) Robards and Scott learned to reduce the scale of their voices, to change emphasis, weight, and color quietly. (Orson Welles did not, and that is why, as fascinating an actor as he is, he always appears somewhat “special,” even freakish, in a movie.) Even with their example an actor who works well in the theater (say, Eric Roberts or Adolph Caesar) often looks ludicrous when he begins appearing in movies. But what is the theater actor to do? He must “project.” Pirandello demonstrated this wittily enough in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, when he put two characters onstage who speak in normal tones and can’t be heard.

Jessica Tandy, as Amanda Wingfield, Tom’s mother, enters, and I suddenly hear Tennessee Williams’s words—Tandy restores their sense and music. Over seventy years old, she is amazingly beautiful. Her concentration and power make me sit up in my seat. But something is wrong. Her Amanda is so strong in every way—will-driven, proud, indignant, decisive—that the play’s meanings go awry. How could this Amanda have allowed the family’s fortunes to decline so disastrously? She would have done something—married again, taken a job, *something*. Laurette Taylor, the original Amanda, in 1946, was apparently more fragile, a lost, fluttering southern lady. And the play? Exquisitely written but small, *small*. Williams’s lyrical moments—his blue roses and *blanc mange*—offered tentatively yet unapologetically, with a trembling, proud awareness of the risk of “beauty” in the theater, remain as touching and as true as ever. But this best-loved of Tennessee Williams’s plays suffers from having been remorselessly plundered and imitated by every lazy playwright and TV scriptwriter of the past thirty-five years. Overfamiliar from inferior imitation, it no longer

catches fire. It will have to lie unperformed for a while in order to become a classic again.

Baby

NOW I KNOW WHAT IVORY SNOW TASTES LIKE. THREE couples, young, very young, and middle-aged, wrestle with the idea, and then the practical problems, of conceiving a child. Much worrying and joking about freedom, sex, responsibility, sperm counts, eggs. But we’ve just *had* a baby, and even so I’m bored by all the bland cheeriness. Richard Maltby, Jr., has written lyrics that go beyond shamelessness (“Just think: Inside me our genes have found their niche/They link: And out’ll come one tap-dancing kid with perfect pitch/What could be better than your own little clone/Who’ll produce all your talents plus a hint of my own”); David Shire’s music has the bounce of daytime TV commercials; and the actors, most of them of the type characterized as “spunky,” race from one side of the set to the other with that peculiar phony Broadway energy, thighs and calves pumping, arms outstretched, knees sliding into place.

In the movies there are kiddie pictures as clean-scrubbed as this, and also some sweet-nothing romances and an occasional Christmas bromide like *On Golden Pond* (which was first a play), but still the spirit is very different. To walk around the corner from Shubert’s Alley to Times Square is to travel an immense social and psychological distance—from upper-middle-class security to the great American nowhere. The moviegoer won’t put up with too much goodness. And often in movies there’s a kind of deep-down nihilism, a surly, alienated indifference, a thoroughly cynical crappiness, that satisfies the big-city moviegoer’s most luxuriously pessimistic moods. The basis of Clint Eastwood’s appeal, and not just to the displaced but to middle-class intellectuals, too, is his exaggeratedly despairing view of America—a country, in Eastwood’s movies, divided between vermin scum and their victims, with only a few righteous avengers staving off complete social collapse. Gangster films have always drawn on disgust for nine-to-five jobs, and horror films assume an open love of bizarre cruelties and ghoulish fantasy. In all these films a “negative” view

of life is part of the subtext, part of what’s *understood*. Movies, a dreamlike experience in the dark, appeal to “everyone,” but especially to the solitary person, the loner, the reader of novels, the reader of horror comics and pornography, and also the teenager, who generally feels misunderstood and out of it; the morose tone of the cinema is part of the reason that the audience trusts it. Theater, on the other hand, appeals to the social-minded, the positive and explicit people who make this country go, and the tone of the theater, all too often, is didactic and public-spirited. Pessi-



mism, even nihilism, is certainly possible in the theater, but such a mood would be so explicit that it would constitute an *issue*. In the theater almost everything must be spelled out, but in a movie the most powerful meanings may emerge principally from the atmosphere, the relation of characters to the world; and that is why a cynical, violent Clint Eastwood movie is hip in a way that a pessimistic and “challenging” Broadway play cannot be. Culturally the movies are both above and below the theater—more subtle, more intricate, at the upper end of the scale (Renoir, Bresson, early Welles), and cruder, more debased, at the lower end. All of which takes me a long way from poor *Baby*, but *Baby* is part of what sends me back, with relief, to Clint Eastwood. Even at their most nihilistic, the movies are never vulgar in the way that the theater is. The movies leave us alone: they rarely appeal to the better part of our nature, they rarely force affirmations or responsibilities on us. We can just sit there, safe in the dark.

Death of a Salesman

A WEDNESDAY MATINEE, AND THE THEATER IS FILLED with high school kids, hundreds of them, holding hands and giggling. Excited and noisy before the play, they sit through it in absolute silence, and rise to their feet to cheer the actors at the end. I dislike *Salesman* so much that I immediately assume that they’ve been prepped, and are merely responding the way their teachers have told them to. Those weeks of poring over the play in English class, how they’ve paid off! Applauding their own seriousness, the pretentious little phonies—cheering for *themselves*!

But that can’t be all of it. Some of them must be genuinely moved, maybe all of them. . . . And if Willy Loman touches them, Uncle Vanya might touch them too—which is probably the hope of their teachers, who, for all I know, are as bored with *Death of a Salesman* as I am. Anyway, there is something in this revival to cheer for. I never saw Lee J. Cobb (the original Willy) do the role, but I can imagine Cobb, with his great heavy brow, his shockingly sensual lips, and his big rump—everything so *massive*—dragging his body across the stage and working up a storm of emotion. Cobb was a tempestuous, overbearing actor, and the other famous Willy Lomans—Paul Muni, Fredric March (in the 1952 movie version), and George C. Scott—were also heavyweights. But the play can’t legitimately support a great deal of emphasis. As tragedy, it is notoriously a failure. Willy is too small for tragedy: he’s foolish, a man with ignoble dreams; he lies, cheats on his wife, sets up false ideals for his son; he never attains a moment of clarity or transcendence—he’s as deluded at the end of the play as at the beginning. He’s small, and that’s the way Dustin Hoffman plays him—as a lightweight, peppy and full of cheer. Hoffman does the stiff-kneed, jerky shuffle of an old man trying to act young. When Willy puts on his hat and goes out to work on his last day, Hoffman vamps Kate Reid (Willy’s wife) with a Jimmy Durante headshake,

caressing his hat brim and noisily exhaling (“*Haaaaah!*”). He’s a man desperately trying to stay on top of things, touching, but a cheapster—a *salesman*, not Oedipus Tyrrannus somehow beached in Brooklyn.

Hoffman is great, he almost makes the play work, but his performance sets me off on theater acting again. What he gives us is not exactly an old man trying to act young but a metaphor for an old man trying to act young. Everything is slightly larger than life—it has to be. And I can’t get used to that. I still haven’t recovered from something I saw more than fifteen years ago: Maurice Evans lighting a cigarette on the stage. The play was an adaptation of Henry James’s great novella *The Aspern Papers*, and Evans was the lead, the “publishing scoundrel” who tries to trick an old lady out of her prized possession—a set of letters from her long-dead lover, who was a famous poet. As I remember, Evans, playing this highly presentable, worldly man, selected a cigarette from a silver case and then put the case back in the inner pocket of his morning coat. He threw out his left arm, thrusting his hand well past the cuff so that we could see the cigarette in his fingers, placed the cigarette in his mouth, struck his match with a tremendous flourish, lit the cigarette, inhaled deeply, and swept the match into the fireplace with one hand as he drew the cigarette out of his mouth with the other, exhaling as fervently as Vesuvius. My God, that cigarette was *lit*. The whole action had a formal grandeur suitable for the signing of the Declaration of Independence. And what was he doing? Evans gave us a metaphor for a Victorian man of the world engaging in cigarette smoking as an exercise in social power.

Of course, a portentously struck match is not unknown in the movies. But how different the tonality of a movie cigarette! Hands cupped, his hat at a slight angle, Bogart lights an unfiltered cigarette, and as the smoke, slowly exhaled, passes into the glossy black nether regions of the frame (Warner Brothers’ chiaroscuro offering the perfect setting for this sort of thing), we see the remarkably liquid quality of Bogart’s ambiguously “hurt” eyes, the eyes of a man of sensibility who has suffered. The cigarette was a sign of his bitter knowledge of the world, of his willingness to accept defeat as the price of knowledge. In the movies of the thirties and forties cigarette smoking by men was associated with experience and heroic vulnerability. A woman who smoked was sexually available—think of Dietrich, or Bette Davis lighting up and batting her eyes, or Lauren Bacall in *To Have and Have Not*, turning a bit of repartee about lighting a cigarette into a whole scene of seduction. The range of these metaphors is, at their best, intimate and romantic, at their worst, no more than naughty-silly and borderline campy, whereas the theater light-up is just self-important. Surely someone will object that a second-rate classical stage actor like Evans should not be compared with the great naturals of the screen. My point, however, is not merely that Bogart and Bette Davis were better actors than Maurice Evans, or even that the meanings yielded by their devastating work with butt and match are smarter and funnier than those suggested by Evans’s

hopeless bit of stage pomp. Yes, certain kinds of meanings are possible in movies and not in the theater, and I'm partial to the more intimate, funnier tone of those meanings. But I think that in the end the reason for that partiality is that the movie cigarette scenes carry less of a burden. The movie scenes are primarily about a man or a woman lighting up; the meaning arises only secondarily and rather modestly, suggested by the context. As in a good literary narrative, metaphorical implications are produced by the accumulation of concrete details; they aren't simply imposed on the narrative.

In the theater almost everything, even Dustin Hoffman's walk, is a metaphor, and almost every meaning is imposed. That is why for us theaterphobes the allegedly electrifying "presence of the live actor" may often be a burden, an intrusion, and a presumption. The theater actor exists at a higher level of intensity, a faster speed, than a person in life. Trying to reach the back of the house with his inner torments, he often creates too much meaning, or too obvious meanings. And not just the actor. Every prop is also a metaphor. Whether elaborate or simple—a huge, double-tiered set (*Sweeney Todd*) or a pair of ash cans (Beckett)—the stage set cannot re-create reality but can only evoke some small portion of it. A sole chair on an empty stage, precisely because it is yanked out of its normal relations with other chairs or a table or a sideboard, is a portentous symbol. If it is accompanied by the table and the rest, it still has the quality of a metaphor—surrounded, as it is, by a proscenium overhead and doors to the side and back through which actors enter and exit. Well, so what? Aren't there good metaphors and bad? And isn't there good staging and bad? Good acting and bad? Yes, of course, but what I'm trying to get at is the basic *uneasiness* that some of us feel in the theater, and I think some of our pain may derive from an unacknowledged notion of the proper relation of representation to metaphor and symbol. In the movies if you turn on the camera, you can photograph trees, or city streets, or the grimy stacks of a steel mill, and all these things are blessedly free of any extra significance. Representing nothing more than themselves, they have a weight and beauty that is almost moral. The solidity of the physical world in a film can be immensely moving: the rain, the streets, the smokestacks, give off a kind of hum—not an actual sound, of course, but a sensation as palpable as the rustling of the woods on a summer night. That sensation is the knowledge, both thrilling and heartbreaking, that the world exists, that a thing in the world is itself and not another thing.

It's commonly said that theater requires more of the spectator's imagination (the implication being that movies are for the literal-minded). But is this really true? On the stage nearly everything—themes, characterization, humor, emotions—is more explicit, and only the settings are

"incomplete." In any case, some of us would rather not complete the work of a mediocre playwright. We would rather look at a picture of something.

I hope I won't be misunderstood: I'm not arguing that a shot of rain on the street, by itself, is art; and I'm not arguing for realism, as against artifice, as a cinematic mode. (Artifice can give off a hum too, though of a different kind.) I'm only trying to explain why theaterphobes can sit through routine movies without experiencing real boredom: we're happy, at some level (however much we're aware of the mediocrity of the film), looking at the Paris cafés or the waves breaking behind the kids in a beach-party comedy—whereas a bad play makes us feel trapped and miserable. For a moviegoer, the theater is often an experience of sensory deprivation. There they are, the actors and the empty stage and the goddamn chairs! There's nothing else to look at, and it's all so murderously *significant*. Unless a genius like Beckett has written the play, and has used the meagerness of the spectacle as a way of evoking life's flirtation with nullity, the pretension of the bare stage is unendurable. At the other extreme, when the stage is full, with sets rapidly wheeled on and off, lights flashing, music blasting, the sense of strain is overwhelming. One wonders how they did it rather than enjoying

Everyone knows that the presence of the camera encourages the actor to calm down and just exist in the role; and everyone also knows (I hope) that this existing for the camera can be a remarkable form of acting. What's not so well understood is the point that the great French critic André Bazin made in his essays on film and theater (in *What Is Cinema?*, Volume I): in the movies the actor doesn't have to carry as heavy a burden as he does on stage; a large

part of the drama is derived from his relation to his surroundings. The actor matters, but so do the peculiar clouds passing overhead, the wide-beamed floor, the cars parked on the street. That is why the argument always used in favor of theater and against cinema—"the presence of the live actor"—is a little beside the point. In the movies many things are "present," and all these things, large and small, animate and inanimate, exist on an equal plane.

Noises Off

FOR A CHANGE I HAVE A GOOD TIME, A GENUINE GOOD time. Michael Frayn's hit—imported, like nearly everything else, from London—is a sort of deconstructed farce. You see a silly comedy being rehearsed; then watch it performed, with much going wrong, from behind the set; then watch it performed again, this time with *everything* going wrong, from out front. Before your eyes the intricate machinery of coincidences, blunders, and confrontations falls apart, the elements roll free, and a new machinery takes its place, one that is both a variation



and a critique of the first. The production, directed by Michael Blakemore, is brilliant, but I know that I'm happy for another reason: Frayn makes a joke out of everything that is awkward and painful in the theater.

Since Ibsen and Strindberg and Shaw, and certainly since the rise of the movies, anyone who has thought seriously about the matter has known that staging realistic plays on realistic sets (life with the fourth wall missing) is problematic at best. A few great playwrights have continued to work as realists, but for the avant-garde, the theorists, and the advanced critics, "illusion" has become the province of the intellectually timid, because the only thing "real" in the theater is the actors holding the stage and the audience watching them. Isn't that why almost every clever modern play seems to be about the theater itself? What else can a smart modern play be about? The self-reflexive strategies of modernism have produced poetry devoted to the process of making poetry, and painting as a commentary on art history, but these are still examples of experimentation. What has figured in the other arts as experiment has become part of the *mainstream* of the theater. By necessity. All those musicals about putting on a show (from *42nd Street* to *A Chorus Line* and beyond) deal with the problem of representation in the most direct way: in a musical about a musical, the playwright needn't struggle to explain why people are standing on a stage. In other kinds of plays he must, and this struggling has made the theater a wretchedly uneasy and self-conscious art form. How many plays hailed as "theatrical" turn out to be devoted to the mechanics of illusion and representation, the ontology of the spectacle itself? The nature of theater forces an obsession with basic aesthetic questions, and even grander matters than that: modern theater visionaries like Artaud and Grotowski, tormented by the question of what to put on the stage, turn the theater into an arena of metaphysical speculation. Devising an acceptable mode of being on the stage becomes a philosophical, rather than a dramatic, problem.

The uneasiness of theater as spectacle encourages a fetish of radical solutions: the middle ground has been burned away, and the avant-garde doubtless feels that it must revolutionize the theater merely to exist in the theater. Expressionism, surrealism, alienation effects, the ritual theater, the silent theater, Artaud's shock tactics, Orson Welles's actors firing blanks at the audience—*anything* to get away from the bourgeois disgrace of realism, the philistine humiliation of representation and imitation. Every successful modern play (aesthetically successful, that is) reinvents the theater. For a while the theater, rescued from intellectual disgrace, can exist again, but then the avant-garde, having defined a new reality onstage, repeats itself, or the imitators and epigones take over, and soon someone has to come up with a new definition of theater. Beckett, it turns out, devised the perfect title not only for his play but also for twentieth-century drama: *Endgame*.

The great inventors of modern drama are heroic figures,

and perhaps we theaterphobes need nothing more than outstanding productions of Brecht and Pirandello and Beckett to shake us out of our hostility. At the same time, we're not particularly eager to see the work of the non-geniuses, the merely ambitious, the spiritually self-aggrandizing. The avant-gardist's concentration on the *means* of making theater is intellectually exhausting at best, a pretentious bore at worst. The avant-gardist is locked into a stance of pure aggression. To the audience he says, in effect, "I create you—before this you did not exist." Well, some of us are not eager to be challenged down to our roots every time we go to the theater; we admit to a degree of laziness and fear, a desire for some common ground, an understanding, at least some of the time, of what transactions are taking place. Some of the most serious theater people in New York are convinced that art consists of giving the audience a hotfoot. Unless they disturb the audience, they cannot justify their existence, for their backs are forever to the wall and they must attack, attack, attack.

All of which takes us a long way from *Noises Off*, which is not an experimental work but a commercial comedy—a play about putting on a play in which the means of making theater are turned into laughter, not philosophy. In the inner play the set has seven doors and an easily breached window, and the characters are two fornicating couples, a burglar, and a housekeeper who loses a plate of sardines. During the first act Michael Frayn shows us the degree of organized frenzy that is involved in producing even a cliché—a routine farce. But the center cannot hold. Like the jungle pushing aside the floorboards of a schoolhouse, life spills into the artificial mold of art and destroys it. *Noises Off* is hilarious—pure entertainment—but what links Frayn to the heroic figures of modern drama is his insistence on dissolving the theatrical illusion and dramatizing the plight of actors who are utterly naked, unsustained by a successful fiction. By the end of the play, all reason for their existence having disappeared, the actors jump—literally jump—for the curtain as it descends, trying to pull it down to cover that awful place the stage.

The Real Thing

I AM DISGRACEFULLY ENVIOUS. NO MERE MOVIE COULD create this much anticipation, this much excitement. It's early in the run, not first night but early, and the theater is filled with important and famous people—media figures, socialites, financial-world luminaries, and hundreds of others who are not familiar to me but who bear the unmistakable signs of power. Both the men and the women have a certain kind of face—an appearance of mastery, sapience, toughness, a shrewdness about the eyes. They are the champs who stride down Madison Avenue on crisp autumn afternoons, who hold the boxes at the Metropolitan Opera and the good tables at Le Cirque and The Four Seasons for lunch. They don't go to the movies much . . . maybe they go in the Hamptons, in the summer, for relax-

ation, but they never turn out en masse like this for a movie opening. No movie could seem as important to them as Tom Stoppard's new play; they have to see it for the next dinner party, the next fund-raiser; they have to see it *now*.

The press has been ecstatic about *The Real Thing*, and it turns out to be entertaining enough. But what is all this talk about brilliance, depth, profundity? Can't the critics see that Stoppard has turned into a better-educated, more rigorous, heterosexual version of Noel Coward? That's not nothing, but let's hold the laurels for a while.

The hero of *The Real Thing*, Henry Boot, has left his wife and is suffering from the infidelity of his new lover, Annie. "I don't believe in behaving well," he says. "I don't believe in debonair relationships. 'How's your lover today, Amanda?' 'In the pink, Charles. How's yours?' I believe in mess, tears, pain, self-abasement, loss of self-respect, nakedness." A fine speech, but how can everyone not see that except for one moment, when Henry, alone, doubles over in pain from what Annie is doing to him, the entire play is an intelligent version of "How's your lover today, Amanda?" Debonair is exactly what it is.

But that's not what really bothers me. The dip—that's the trouble with *The Real Thing*. The what? The dip, the *dip*. In the first act Henry, who is a playwright, and his wife, Charlotte, an actress appearing in his current play, serve drinks to Max, also an actor in the play. Annie, who is Max's wife and Henry's lover (secretly, at this point), shows up with some vegetables. "Crudités! Perfect title for a pornographic revue," says Henry, as Charlotte goes off to make a dip. "Charlotte will provide dips for the crudity," says Henry. "She knows where everything is." This is a bit more than a sportive pun. The adulterous Henry may suspect that Charlotte has been fooling around too; their marriage is at its end, and they cannot stop taunting each other. In any case, the dip is brought out and found wanting. So Max joins Charlotte in the kitchen to make a *new* dip, leaving the lovers, Annie and Henry, alone. The second dip is then brought out and consumed. Still with me? Patience, I'm coming to the point. Much later, near the end of Act Two, after Henry and Annie have left their spouses and set up house together, the anti-nuke protester Brodie shows up at their flat. The working-class Brodie, earlier sent to prison for vandalizing a national monument during a peace demonstration, has been the cause of much argument in this household. He comes to visit because a play he has written (based in part on a meeting with Annie on a train) has been grudgingly rewritten by Henry and, in this improved state, produced by the BBC. Drinks are served. The *dip* is served. But Brodie turns out to be a lout—not only a terrible writer with a weakness for Marxist platitudes but an ungrateful and abusive ruffian. "Finish your drink, will

you?" says Annie. "Why not?" says Brodie, who imagines that Annie fancies him. "I can come back for some dip another time." At which point Annie, in a brilliant *coup de théâtre*, empties the dip onto Brodie's face. He leaves, thoroughly beaten, and Annie and Henry are reconciled. End of play.

Now, I have left a great deal out—Annie's infidelity, the arguments between Henry and Annie about "the real thing" in music, writing, and love—but the dip is important, it's a key element in the scaffolding, which, in the work of a modernist like Stoppard, turns out to be a large part of what the play is truly about. And what I want to say about the dip is this: writing for the theater is a terrible thing; it forces you to *construct*; it forces you to be *witty*. In *The Real Thing* that mayonnaise-and-lemon-juice goop is simultaneously a) food, a staple of the play's upper-middle-class, Brie-and-white-wine tone; b) a simple device for getting two characters off the stage (in order to leave two others on it); c) the inspiration for two semi-obscene puns that touch on the play's undercurrent of sexual desire, competition, and fear; and d) a weapon of considerable violence—indeed, the latest version of that standard theatrical prop, the gun waved in the first act that goes off and kills someone in the third.

This multiple use of dip is really quite brilliant, but in another way it's awful. It's what I hate about "good" plays: the narrow sense of economy, the efficiency, the phony coherence—a few small possibilities opened up, turned this way and that, and then rapidly closed down. Construction! Construction! In *The Real Thing* the conversation on the train between Annie and Brodie (we never actually see it) is related by Annie; written up by Brodie in a play, which is then read aloud, with great disgust, by Henry; re-enacted, on another train, by Annie and a young actor in love with her; rewritten by Henry; and performed, in Henry's version, on television. By the time the audience has heard all these Variations on a Theme by Brodie, it may think it has experienced some sort of dramatic event, but it *hasn't*. Echoes, recurrences, reversals, inversions, recapitulations . . . The audience chuckles knowingly whenever Stoppard brings his train scene around again, because no one can miss what he's doing. He's some kind of peculiar new magician who reveals

how the tricks are done even as he's pulling them off, and he makes the audience feel immensely clever. Perhaps that's why the powerful love this play. It flatters them. *The Real Thing* is just intricate enough to require full attention, yet everyone *gets* it, and then feels learned and witty, because the play rewards one for responding exactly as it has cued one to respond. (That might be the definition of a fashionable play.)

In movies practically no one making narrative films but a baroque modernist like Alain Resnais or a madcap puz-



zle-maker like the Nicolas Roeg who directed *Don't Look Now* would contrive a structure so ostentatiously overarticulated. God knows, it's not as if the temptation didn't exist. The movies—precise images placed in immediate juxtaposition—give one absolute control over time and space, control that is unimaginable in the theater. As every student filmmaker finds out, the possibilities of formal manipulation in movies are endless. But in feature-film making, an obsession with formal play almost always looks strained and precious; the greatest directors, obsessed instead with what they want to show us of the world's suffering and pleasure, have buried the bones and ligaments deep in the body of the work (as Chekhov did), not worn them outside like a kind of dancing Halloween costume.

Hitchcock was much given to formal devices like limiting a movie to a single character's point of view or showing the same event from *different* points of view, but Hitchcock's manipulateness, his closed, overdetermined forms, however brilliant, have always been an emblem of his narrowness as an artist. The greatest directors have opened up the big world, filling the frame with life, more and more of it—you can sense the godlike exultation of these imperialists of the cinema, their refusal ever to say "enough!" The more a director opens up, of course, the harder it is for him to impose a formal design. The supreme movie artists—Griffith, Murnau, Renoir, Kurosawa, early Welles, Ford, Buñuel, the Francis Ford Coppola who made the *Godfather* movies, the Truffaut who made *Jules and Jim*—have struck some miraculous balance between free-and-easy inclusiveness and thematic rigor. You could never quite summarize, as you could with a play of Peter Shaffer's, what one of their movies "says," for every great movie has a kind of sensuous radiance that is ineffable. At the higher levels in movies questions of form tend to get lost, or superseded; the director's sensibility takes over, a force so powerful that it governs every angle, every movement, every shadow and breeze. Even a merely good movie has a palpable body—a tone, a specific gravity, an aura. A play may be something to admire, but a movie works its way into your dreams.

'night, Mother

THE USHERETTES ARE THE MOST WONDERFUL PEOPLE in the Broadway theater. Dressed like the housekeepers of an earlier era—funerary black, white collars, white shoes—they are immensely old, many of them, and their sad Irish faces look wan and indistinct, worn away, it seems, by the thousands of angry words hurled at them from the stage. As you come in, they greet you with an expression of pained solicitude, as if to say, "Dearie, it won't be as bad as all that." They are awfully sweet at 'night, *Mother*, Marsha Norman's 1983 Pulitzer prize-winner about a young woman who commits suicide virtually in front of her mother's eyes. It's a Wednesday matinee, late in the run last winter, and only two hundred

or so people, most of them middle-aged or elderly women, have shown up for the performance. The usherettes ignore what's printed on the tickets, seating everyone down front in cozy groupings. One helps a blind lady to her seat: "I'd bring you a *Playbill* in Braille, dear, but they don't print one. There's so little respect for the blind." Am I imagining it, or are they especially kindly today?

Of course! It is the play. The usherettes know what is in store for the audience, and, sure enough, within twenty minutes half the women sitting near me have removed tissues and handkerchiefs from their purses. Onstage, the actress Kathy Bates is a nightmare version of their daughters—large and beefy, with a round, colorless, dead-looking face and untended hair hanging straight down. Her voice flickers meanly across the lines. Bates's Jessie is an epileptic, divorced, with a juvenile-delinquent son. Disgusted, she has completely let herself go; her appearance is both a confession and an accusation. Cruelly truthful, logical, exact, she feels miserable all the time, and can see no reason to go on living. For a while I am touched by that face, and by Thelma, Jessie's mother (played by Anne Pitoniak), a cheerfully oblivious woman in her late sixties who puts up a game but useless resistance to Jessie's despair. Surrounded by weeping women, I feel something at last: the implacability of a daughter's unhappiness, and the way a mother might receive it—would have to receive it—as a reproach.

But then my old theater restlessness returns. As I listen to Jessie, it occurs to me that she is too intelligent and resourceful to have arrived at such a pass. Anyone this bright would have discovered something to do with her life. She would *not* commit suicide. But wait, that's silly—too commonsensical by half. People who commit suicide are often intelligent, and in any case, Jessie has to be articulate and impressive, or else there would be no play—or only an unwatchable play. Listening to a stupid, unimaginative person at the end of her rope would be truly unendurable. No, what gets me is the utterly *determined* nature of the spectacle. You sit there looking at Jessie and her mother in their ghastly combined-living-room-and-kitchen, with its yellow sofa and iron-grillwork tables and awful prints hanging on the wall, and your resistance to her choice—the resistance anyone would feel confronting a person determined to commit suicide—fades away and is replaced by eagerness for it all to be over. The set is a lower-middle-class kitsch prison from which there is no escape. What else can Jessie do but pull the trigger? Where can she go? The play has to end, and the horrifying little set doesn't offer even the memory of freedom. The clock, set at eight, will arrive at nine-thirty, when the gun will go off; the whole action is plotted against the clock. 'night, *Mother* never descends to easy sentiment, never turns Jessie into an abstraction. It has the craziness of real experience—Jessie's preparing food for her mother to eat after she is dead is a cruelly funny touch—but it's still a theatrical stunt. Nine-thirty, and the gun goes bang! Every perfor-

mance! 'night, *Mother* is both a demonstration and a death ritual, and the thought of its being repeated eight times a week fills me with disgust; it seems a sin against life and experience. At least in a movie version of this material (and I don't, in truth, long for it), with the trees and roads and railroad tracks outside the house, the moths banging into the light over the kitchen table, dogs barking somewhere—with all of that going on, the act of self-annihilation would not seem so vulgarly mechanical. A clock hanging on the wall would indicate merely the time, not the inexorable limits of Jessie's existence. Indeed, with all the physical means of freedom so obviously there, and beckoning, Jessie's decision to destroy herself would take us far deeper into the hell of an utterly logical mind.

True West and Fool for Love

FOR YEARS I'VE HEARD PEOPLE SAY OF SAM SHEPARD'S work, "I can't tell you what his plays are about, but they're great theater." As it happens, *True West* and *Fool for Love*, two of Shepard's recent works (which I saw only a few nights apart), are perfectly intelligible, and though they are certainly "good theater"—in the sense that they burn up your attention—I begin to wonder if that phrase doesn't imply something gimmicky and desperate and empty. Does "good theater" have to mean "not about anything *but* the theater"?

True West, set in a southern California suburban kitchen, features two brothers—Lee, a loutish petty thief and housebreaker, and Austin, a rather proper young screenwriter. Lee, whom one expects to be defeated, a loser, possesses mysterious powers of aggression and one-upmanship—a sort of intimidating bottom-dog brilliance—and he goads his milky brother without mercy, until Austin responds by taking over some of Lee's character and turning into a bully himself. Shepard plays the old theatrical game of having two men exchange characters. Lee becomes, or tries to become, a screenwriter, and Austin, who secretly admires the surly, semi-psychopathic Lee for living alone in the desert, proves his manhood to himself by breaking into people's houses, like Lee, and stealing toasters. The tables are turned; the mouse becomes a rat; the maker of illusions—a screenwriter—embraces experience, while the degenerate man of the West turns to art. The wiggle in this dialectical exchange is that Lee's ideas for a western movie are mortifyingly banal. Still, the play would be far too symmetrical were it not for Shepard's American fondness for mess and destruction—the beer cans strewn about the linoleum, the innumerable pieces of toast popping up out of the stolen toasters all at once, the typewriter that refuses to yield up a screenplay and gets slowly and methodically hacked to pieces by a golf club.

True West is fun, yet the reason it plays so well, surviving many changes of cast, is that it's not seriously about anything but actors holding the stage—actors building tension, getting a grip on each other, dominating, bullyragging, undermining, succumbing, rebounding, table-turning, and on and on, across the whole spectrum of power exchanges. After the tumultuous jive, the runaway hipster rhetoric, of his early plays, Shepard now offers Pinteresque pauses, the comedy of the bland repetition and the malicious bland question. The theater air is carved, punctuated, rhymed, but in the course of all this aggression there is only one piece of real writing—a splendid Shepardian story, told by Austin, of how the boys' alcoholic father left his teeth in a doggy bag, along with some chop suey, in a bar somewhere in the desert. The story over, the two brothers begin playing tricks on each other again, and the play finally ends, completely unresolved, when Shepard runs out of theater games.

Fool for Love turns out to be even more of an acting exercise. May, a slatternly waitress, and Eddie, a movie cowboy/stuntman, lovers for years, meet at a motel "on the edge of the Mojave desert" and enact a series of erotic power games. They stalk each other around the edges of the room; they slam the walls, which have been miked, with their elbows, fists, and backs, producing booming thuds as loud as incendiary bombs hitting Tokyo. At one point they turn to face each other and move slowly, one step at a time, with long pauses between steps, into a fervent embrace, mouth to mouth, chest to chest, hands clawing at backs and thighs—until May knees Eddie in the groin. Good theater! Eddie, one of Shepard's aging egomaniacal studs, a hero consumed by his own myth, si-



multaneously electrifies and ravages May, who is a young earth mother, both well used and badly used. At first one thinks the play will be a kind of superheated ritual of eros. But oh, no, it doesn't work out that way: the acting rhythms, which in the initial half-hour appear to express semi-psychotic tensions, take on a life of their own, and stop expressing anything except the varieties of stage movement on a small set. The play is too loud and ranting, too externalized, to be erotic.

Richard Gilman, in his introduction to Shepard's *Seven*

Plays, writes that Shepard's characters are mostly rootless Americans longing to define themselves: "Might not the true questions in putting forth the self, certainly in the theater but also in life with its theatrical hunger, be 'who do I seem to be?' and 'what am I taken for?' And might not the quest for identity really be the quest for a *role*?" And later Gilman lists some of the theatrical forms that this quest takes: "the transformations, the splitting of characters, the masks, the roles within roles, the mingling of legendary figures with invented ones." He continues, "And I think of the 'turns,' the numbers, the oratorios and arias, and especially the monologues or soliloquies that aren't simply contributions to the plot but outcries of characters craving to be known."

One could conclude, as Gilman has, that Shepard has a perception of American life that is brilliantly suited to the theater. But after my experience of these two plays (and my reading, here and there, in Shepard's work) I would spin this notion around and suggest that Shepard's central theme of rootlessness and the need for identity has been produced by the mere necessity of *making theater*. The means of creating the theatrical spectacle limits, even determines, its meaning. Can it be a coincidence that so many modern plays turn out to be portraits of isolation, rootlessness, inertia, stasis? People stuck in the bog of habit and failure, imprisoned by the past, trapped by illusion, trapped by the fear of *losing* their illusions? Waiting for Godot, living in ash cans, trapped in the country, trapped in the city, trapped in kitchens, trapped in bars, trapped in rooming houses? Apart from the theater itself, what can a modern play be about but stasis and entrapment? These are the subjects that can be represented on the stage. Some of these plays have been composed in a realistic mode, some make revolutionary use of the stage, but they are all works marked, and in some cases defined, by the means required to make them exist. The playwright, unlike the novelist and the film director, is not free.

Heartbreak House

ALL THIS THEATERGOING MAY BE WEARING DOWN MY resistance. Sitting along one side of Circle in the Square's three-quarter thrust stage, only a few feet from the actors, I get happily caught up in Bernard Shaw's apocalyptic house party. The production, directed by the Englishman Anthony Page, is perhaps a little too complacently civilized: my ideal *Heartbreak House* would evoke, in addition to Chekhov (Shaw called the play "a fantasia in the Russian manner on English themes"), both *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the Book of Revelations. For this production the text has been cut slightly, the ending somewhat altered. But some of the actors are good, and the play is a dream of perfect articulateness—vigorously poetic language that is still imaginable as Edwardian speech. Shaw began *Heartbreak House* in 1914, and perhaps that fateful year was the last time anyone could take the measure of

an entire society and make it all *sound*. After the war the compact of language was broken. Some of Shaw's plays just rattle on, but in this one the flow of eloquence is glorious—and shaming to modern ears. The sound of contemporary speech—demoralized, fragmented, bland, dully violent—is bearable onscreen, where the camera's intimacy with the actor makes language an organic, inescapable expression of the whole person. But contemporary speech declaimed onstage reveals a frightening diminution of self.

Perhaps a happy, confident, easy theater requires a large public self. The English actors in this production still have it. As Hesione, the bohemian earth mother, Rosemary Harris is abundant, elemental, hilarious. And Rex Harrison makes me forget my objection to theatrical voices. Harrison, who plays Captain Shotover, the brilliant, gloomy old sea captain, begins speaking before he makes his entrance, and the audience, hearing those familiar tones, sighs happily. Harrison's voice flies high, coming close, at the top register, to an indignant screech, and then plunges suddenly, perilously, *down* to a resonant baritone growl. Swinging up and down, his voice argues implacably for its own point of view. It says, "You are all irrational—if only you will listen to me, everything will be fine." Buoyed by Harris, Harrison, and the others, I come out of the theater slightly giddy, feeling potent in speech.

My One and Only

I'M ON A ROLL. THIS PASTICHE OF TWENTIES MUSICALS, with its Gershwin score stitched together from *Funny Face* and other places, its flat art-deco-picture-postcard sets, its consciously innocuous plot and sets, easy chatter, is too charmingly silly to arouse even the shadow of dismay. I feel not fully awake while watching it but, rather, in a kind of pleasant half-trance; it has the lulling rhythm of a train ride through the country on a bright day. No issue is raised by it, no serious aesthetic challenge taken up; it even lacks the intensity that a complete dedication to style can bring out in shallow people. Everything is easy, and the great black tap dancer Charles "Honi" Coles raises ease to the level of art. On the day I see the show, Twiggy has a cold and croaks a bit, and on any day Tommy Tune is perhaps too relaxed to be a great dancer, but they are both singular enough—the show more than achieves the lacquered, gleaming style of fifty years ago.

Sunday in the Park with George

"I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M SITTING HERE WATCHING A musical about the birth of pointillism!" The lady sitting in the next seat—maybe sixty, a veteran musicalgoer for sure—is very angry. Somewhere near the end of the first act of Stephen Sondheim's new work, which tells the story of the creation of Seurat's masterpiece, *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*, she begins to talk out loud, and her scorn rips through the somnolent audi-

ence. "It's so undramatic!" she says, incensed. To my amazement, no one shushes her. Instead, people turn and nod—a little shocked, perhaps, but not outraged by this breach of public manners. A few mutter their agreement.

Her outburst comes as a shock to me, too, because, not knowing anything in advance about *George* (it is an early preview performance), I have been sitting all attention in my seat, feeling rather distinguished. What's onstage is so perversely uninvolving that I admire my own persistence in staying interested in it. At the beginning of the show Mandy Patinkin, as Seurat, sits brooding over a bare canvas, an empty stage behind him. As the act progresses, we see the elements of his great painting take shape: grass and trees slide into place; two-dimensional dogs stand up through slits in the turf; human figures, both real and painted (on cut-out pieces of wood), are placed, moved, recalled, and placed again. The mental image of the canvas slowly forms in Seurat's mind, then dissolves, then forms again. Sondheim and James Lapine (who wrote the book and directed) also show us scenes from Seurat's life—quarrels with his mistress, encounters with rival painters and various strangers wandering on *La Grande Jatte*. All this material feeds into the great work, and as the act reaches its climax, the painting "composes" onstage, every figure, every detail and subtlety of light, falling into place.

By this time my neighbor's public griping has awakened me fully from my trance of self-approval. For she is right, of course. *Sunday in the Park with George* is completely undramatic—especially the songs, which reach a certain plateau, both emotionally and tonally, and then just stay there, repeating themselves for a spell before ending. But the public critic wasn't quite right when she said that the show was about "the birth of pointillism." As it happens, Sondheim and Lapine probably don't know all that much about Seurat, who made few friends, kept no diary (at least, none has been discovered), completed a small number of paintings, and died young. What they've put onstage is a conventional intransigent artist; he could be almost anybody. One repeats oneself, but so be it: *Sunday in the Park with George* is about the theater—the possibilities of set design, lighting, stage movement. Immensely sophisticated as theater craft, it is naively bad as art, ambitious in ways that are beside the point. The show demonstrates that a great painting can be re-created onstage. What of it? There's been much talk of Sondheim's originality, but the truth of the matter is that no one has been so foolishly literal-minded before; no one has given himself over to laborious diddling on quite this scale. Innovative yet dull, commercially hazardous yet academic, *Sunday in the Park with George* represents the triumph of theatrical vanity. It seems to have been devised in order to be celebrated in the Sunday *New York Times*.

1980

A GROWN MAN, SITTING IN A CHAIR, HOLDS A BOWL OF porridge in his lap. "Pour *maman*," he says, spooning the stuff into his mouth. "Pour *papa* . . ." A group of twenty or so men and women, dressed in fifties silks and wide-lapeled suits, and smirking evilly (it is the avant-garde smirk), walk up and down the aisles, making snaky, preening movements with their hands and arms. A woman undresses a man down to his shorts, paints his lips and nipples, and lights some birthday candles, which she sticks between his toes. A woman exposes the bottom of a man lying across her legs, a baby waiting to be spanked; later he lies on the ground, and as the entire company assumes the various poses of sunbathers at the beach, he covers himself with blankets, leaving only his bare rump out in the air. Men dance with "dead" women, whose bodies hang limp; they toss women to one another, catching them in their arms with the studied, impassive mastery of great dancers. Memories of childhood mingle with images of humiliation, dominance, infantilism. Life and death on real green grass! Real grass brought in from Long Island and laid down on the stage!

Dazed and baffled, I slouch to the cutting edge: it is a performance by Pina Bausch's Wuppertaler Tanztheater, from West Germany, the semi-legendary avant-garde dance troupe whose work crosses the line into theater, mime, magic, Dadaist assault. Earlier in its engagement, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the company had given a mud-soaked *Rite of Spring* and also *Bluebeard's Castle*, a ballet choreographed to the music of Bartók's savage opera. But this piece, *1980*, has very little dancing; it is theater or it is nothing. Bausch has not given the work a plot in any conventional sense, though with considerable guesswork one might recast the elaborate mon-keyshines into a "structure" and deduce "meanings" from the recurring motifs—the Germanic images of mastery and submission. Yet as I sit watching *1980*, I cannot help feeling that the normal, almost involuntary effort to discover meaning is beside the point. *1980* carries the Dadaist attack on logic to epic lengths. The stage is filled with frenzied activity—chaos in depth—followed by frozen silence. Everything is forced to extremes: couples



dance slowly to the adagio movement of a Beethoven sonata for piano and cello; a few instants later everyone rushes about screaming "Help!" while Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance" treads grandly on. Many of the theater japes are familiar from the Happenings of the sixties: a bullying voice from the balcony poses questions and makes demands (Tell us what you are afraid of. Show us your scars), and the actors answer in frightened voices. There are odd-ball recitations—a man declares his love to a chair—and games of Musical Chairs and Drop the Handkerchief. For

long stretches there is more activity on the stage than you can take in, and this Boschian overloading of the medium hints at something sinister—a sense of the obscene superfluity of life. For an instant the apocalypse gathers in the void of meaning, in the maddening larks and games. But most of *1980* is innocuous. On and on it goes, passing through repetitions, variations, recapitulations. It stops after three and a half hours but could have gone on for five hours or six (and doubtless did in some earlier form).

The friend sitting next to me, a man who loves the theater, fumes and mutters to himself, but I am released into complete irresponsibility. I stop fighting the stage and float, feeling nothing, not even boredom. It is only later, the next day, that resistance grows. The question of meaning returns. When you are watching it, an avant-garde piece like *1980* seems to dissolve the problem of representation onstage. As the modernist litany goes, a work of art should not represent something but stand free—not an imitation of something in the world but a new object added to the world. Yet when this aesthetic is applied to the theater (or the cinema), doesn't it seem peculiarly naive? For the images onstage generate real-world associations, and if the associations don't link up, one feels cheated. After three or four scenes in which men are reduced to infants, one looks for corroborating signs. Is *1980* a critique of male infantilism in our culture? Or is Pina Bausch just releasing her feelings toward men?

The crowd doesn't seem bothered by the incoherence of *1980*. I look them over. They are a professional avant-garde audience, by which I mean they cannot be shocked by what others would find unintelligible. In one sense, for all their sophistication, they are patsies—they have lost the capacity for outrage. They sit patiently through *1980*, laughing loudly at anything they understand. They particularly love a basso-voiced actress/dancer named Mechthild Grossmann, who addresses them directly, in the manner of a demented talk-show host. She points at things happening onstage, laughs coarsely, and, with arms outstretched, palms up, shouts, "Isn't that *fantastic*?" Over and over. "This grass is pretty damn green. Isn't that *fantastic*?" Hilarity overtakes the audience. Yes, fantastic, but when everything is fantastic, nothing matters. Art requires some sort of hierarchy of values, not mere repetition. This brush with the avant-garde relieves none of my woes. If the theater of representation is embarrassing, this example of the theater of non-representation is too trivial to get angry about.

Glengarry Glen Ross

I CAN'T SEE IT, BUT I CAN CERTAINLY FEEL IT—A DEEP blush, first of pleasure, then of mortification, then of pleasure again, spreading across unwilling cheeks. Where have I been all this writer's life? The first act of David Mamet's new play is thrilling. I don't know when I've heard on a stage words so eager to be spoken, so charged in rhythm, so juicy to play, so completely "overheard" yet

poetic. The act consists of three short scenes, each with two men, all set in a dowdy Chinese restaurant. In the first a sixtyish real-estate salesman who is losing his grip tries to get the office manager to give him some leads. What are leads? Are they pieces of property for sale or names of prospective clients? (The latter, it turns out.) Mamet doesn't tell us much; the desperation of the salesman is all the context we get, but it's more than enough. This man is so anxious, and split so many ways about how to proceed—boasting of past prowess, insulting, propitiating, begging, bribing—that he speaks in fragments, changing direction every few words, knocking himself out against a wall of indifference. As we listen, we realize that Mamet has discovered a new mode of American speech—a language of pure intention, which darts ahead, anticipating objections and refusals, and then collapses anyway at the first sign of resistance.

In the second scene two more salesmen meet. A rancorous, hard-nosed type leads the other man, an imitative weakling, through a litany of the company's sins. The company has exploited them for years, given them meager commissions, set the salesmen in brutal competition with one another. To punish the bastards, the first man says, someone should break into the office, steal the leads, and sell them to a rival firm.

"Are you actually *talking* about this?" says the second man, getting nervous. "Or are we just . . ."

"No, we're just . . ."

"We're just *talking* about it."

"We're just *speaking* about it. [Pause] As an *idea*."

In the third scene still another salesman subjects a silent fellow at the next table to an astonishing monologue that turns out to be a sales pitch. But what a pitch! The salesman reviews his entire life, passing through a kind of Socratic dialogue with himself, each answer leading to another question, constructing a kind of ethos of the business civilization in which every value is equal to every other value. What's so funny about this monologue is that the man's ideas, delivered so forcefully, invariably run into a thicket of equivocation; he is copiously, self-confidently indefinite. Ethics are just a memory, a set of poses, as useful or useless as anything else. Yet the salesman's antinomian philosophy makes him happy; it gives him freedom to operate, to *sell*, and that is the only thing he cares about.

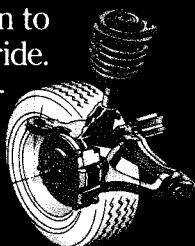
Each of these scenes drives ahead with a fierce inner logic—cruel, exact, hilarious—that makes the audience laugh from the opening words. The second act, set in the real-estate office the morning after it has been robbed, isn't quite so miraculously concentrated. You can feel Mamet making theater, working up conventional suspense, throwing in surprises—but the language keeps forging ahead. Hard and impervious, harsh, narrowly defined, *Glengarry Glen Ross* is as precise as *Death of a Salesman* is vague and rhetorical. Mamet shares nothing of Arthur Miller's pained, sorrowfully disapproving attitude, his Old Testament lamentations over lives devoted to false ideals. These men love to sell, just as warriors love to fight, and Mamet celebrates the go-ahead American business ener-



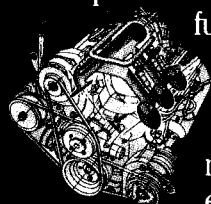
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gy—the desperation, the lies, the flamboyance and courage of a really outrageous shuck. Mamet is the true heir to Chandler and Hammett, and to Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur, whose play about the exhilarations of yellow journalism, *The Front Page*, is an American classic. He sticks to his business, giving you the shoptalk, the insiders' jargon, the way the men feel about their lives. He doesn't have to tell us that they're corrupt; we can see that, and both enjoy and deplore that part of their appetite which links up to our own. He raises no larger issues, but what the play says about the tendency of our business civilization to slip into fraud is devastating and unanswerable.

The language that Mamet has developed in *Glengarry Glen Ross* is really a great discovery—a find comparable in importance to a biochemist's ordering of the elements in a newly isolated molecule. Mamet may have heard evidence of something momentous—perhaps a change in the American character. I would guess that he heard it not only in offices (for a while in his youth Mamet worked in Chicago real estate) but also in such prime records of American felony as the transcripts of Nixon's talks with Dean, Haldeman, and Ehrlichman. In those weird, disintegrating dialogues, a mass of crooked intentions, literally unspeakable, broke language into semi-coherent shards, with only a glint of fact shining through the vague surface of allusion and deception. The President and his advisers, men with an ostensible commitment to legality, *spoke* about covering up crimes—they alluded to the subject suggestively—without actually talking about it. That way they could indignantly deny that the subject ever came up.

When the transcripts were published, people were shocked not only by the meanness of spirit they revealed but also by the manic slovenliness of the talk. The transcripts were like rubble heaps of broken furniture: no one phrased anything gracefully, or even accurately; no one ever completed a sentence. Clearly, something is happening to American speech, and the artists are on to it. In such works as *Mean Streets* and *Taxi Driver* the film director Martin Scorsese made something anguished and heartbreaking out of verbal trash. Though flawlessly clear as emotion and psychology, the first great scene in *Mean Streets* between Robert De Niro and Harvey Keitel (two Little Italy punks) is hopelessly disorganized as language. As generations of screenwriters looked on in dismay, the two actors, improvising around a few basic script ideas, constructed an intricate, highly charged web of implication, allusion, denial—all of it exhilaratingly obscene and funny—out of fragments. In *Glengarry Glen Ross* Mamet has achieved the same degree of spontaneity with written-out dialogue.

The Broadway production of *Glengarry Glen Ross* is very simple, but it's fully adequate for what Mamet wants to accomplish. The *language* is the set, the lighting, the drama; and for the moviegoer, it burns away the embarrassment of stage representation. My reference to Scorsese's great films was more than casual. *Glengarry Glen Ross* is a moviegoer's play: it has the hard, cool, nonsymbolic quality, the violence, the fullness, of a great American movie.

FOR MOVIEGOERS LIKE MYSELF, THE THEATER SEEMS caught in a gigantic double bind. The closer it comes to realistic representation, the more it betrays how inadequate it is next to the cinema; the further away from representation it moves, the more it loses contact with what interests us in the world and becomes preoccupied with the means of its own existence. And yet, having made my little survey, I know that a few plays each year will transcend this bizarre predicament. It turns out that when I began going to the theater last winter, I was looking for something; and it was only near the end of my time in the trough of Shubert's Alley that I found out what it was: not "good theater," or even "good drama," but the *word*. For it is the word that has been banished from the cinema. As the audience for American movies has shifted downward in age, young film-school graduates, often without any literary or theatrical training at all, have taken over the directors' seats. For these young men and women, and also for the studio executives and marketing experts who back them, the screenplay has lost its earlier standing (admittedly shaky) as a complicated narrative with reasonably developed characters and perhaps a few memorable lines. The screenplay is now a "concept"—a salable idea. It's a Hollywood commonplace that Robert Towne's masterly screenplay for *Chinatown* (1974) would not be produced now, and that *Citizen Kane* and *All About Eve* wouldn't even be read. In recent years only one original screenplay of note—Barry Levinson's *Diner*, which he also (luckily) directed—has made it into the movie theaters. This past fall the indifference to writing reached such a pitch, even among critics, that a film as parched, cautious, and essentially *unwritten* as Robert Benton's *Places in the Heart* was hailed all over the country as a great picture.

But in the theater language still reigns. David Rabe's recent *Hurlyburly* is a bad play—nutty repetitive, rancid, and even rather cheap. Yet Rabe, like Mamet, has made some serious discoveries about the way Americans speak. Set amid the crumb-bum screenwriters, actors, and casting directors of Hollywood—the fourth-raters and hangers-on—the play is about callous people who fill the gaping space where their emotions should be with an elaborate kind of California psycho-babble. They all know that in certain situations they should feel something; their language represents the enfeebled California superego at work—the homage that words pay to the *idea* of feeling, a discourse about emotion in place of having any. As I say, the play isn't a success, but Rabe is definitely onto something; and as the long, peculiar sentences unfold, the audience hardly breathes. Rabe and Mamet have achieved mastery of language, and not for its own sake, or merely as a vehicle for actors, or even as the essence of "the drama," but as a sign, as a trace—a bit of spoor, actually—of the great beast lurking outside. Neither *Glengarry Glen Ross* nor *Hurlyburly* is a play about the resources of the theater, but the theater is the indispensable lens that brings them both into focus.

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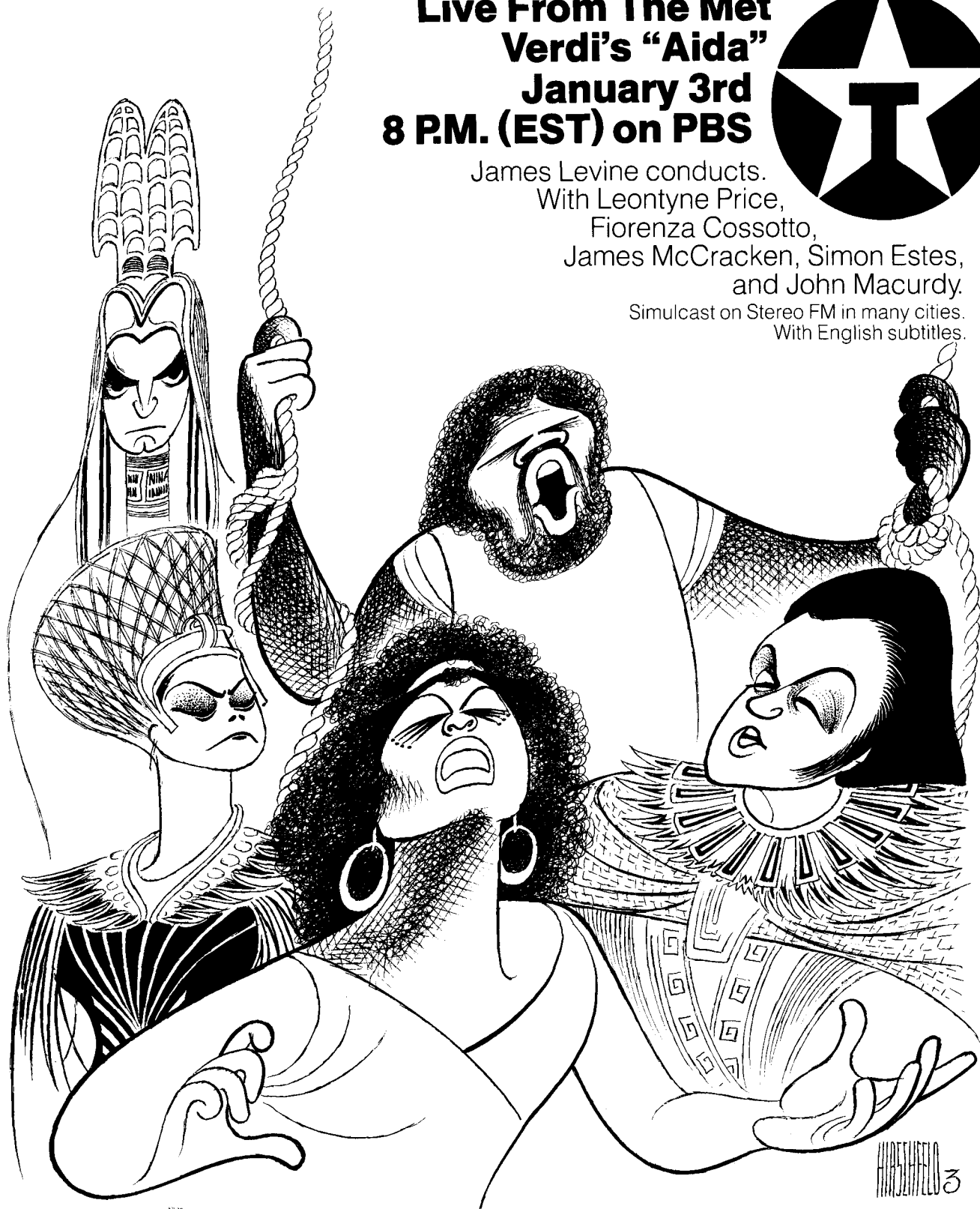
Fiorenza Cossotto,

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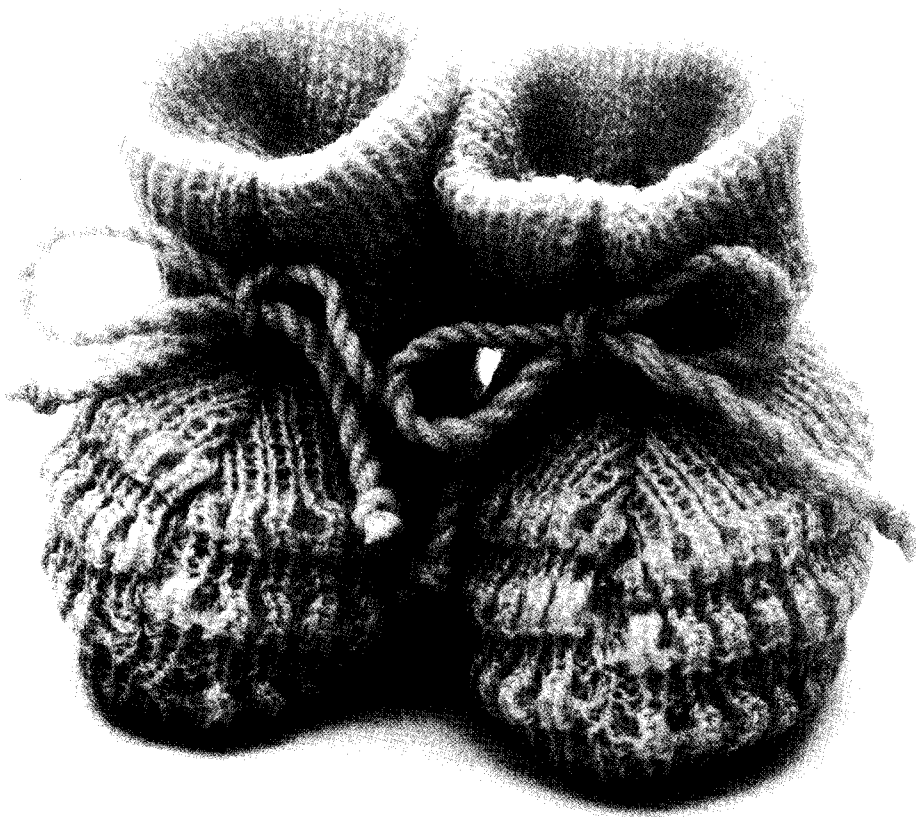
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Should infants born with treatable or manageable handicaps be "allowed" to die? One civil libertarian says no

THE AWFUL PRIVACY OF BABY DOE

BY NAT HENTOFF

EIGHTEEN MONTHS HAD PASSED SINCE THE INDIANA baby, born with Down's syndrome and a defective digestive system, had been allowed to die of starvation and dehydration. But Linda McCabe, a registered nurse in the special-care nursery of Bloomington Hospital, was still mourning both the infant and her inability to save him.

"At least I wasn't part of the killing," she told me when I asked her to talk about it. "The other nurses in special care and I told the hospital administration we would not help starve that child. So the baby was moved to another part of the hospital, and the parents had to hire private nurses."

Linda McCabe, remembering the evening the orders came to give the baby nothing by mouth and no intravenous feeding, became angry all over again. "Who did they think they were—asking me to do something like that? By the fourth day it got so bad, thinking about that baby just lying there, crying, that some of us nurses started checking in law books to see if we could find some legal arguments to stop the killing of that baby. But as it turned out he only had two more days to live."

I had found Linda McCabe through a Bloomington pediatrician, James Schaffer, who when the baby was born had strongly recommended routine surgery to correct the infant's deformed esophagus, so that he could eat normally. The parents rejected Dr. Schaffer's advice. They did not want a retarded child.

It is impossible to tell so soon after birth whether a child with Down's syndrome will be mildly, moderately, or severely retarded. The coroner wrote later: "The potential for mental function and social integration of this child, as of all infants with Down's syndrome, is unknown."

Nonetheless, the parents had agreed with their obstetrician, Dr. Walter Owens, that a child with Down's syndrome cannot attain what Dr. Owens called "a minimally adequate quality of life." On the baby's last day Dr. Schaffer and two colleagues, despite the wishes of the parents, went, bearing intravenous equipment, to feed the baby. They were too late. The process of dying could not be reversed.

The baby died on April 15, 1982. Two days later *The Evansville* [Indiana] *Courier* printed a letter from Sherry McDonald: "The night before little Infant Doe died, I called the Indiana Supreme Court and told them I wanted the baby saved. Then my 16-year-old called and said, 'I am a Down's syndrome child and I want the baby boy saved.'"

I had come to Dr. Schaffer and Linda McCabe while trying to learn more about this form of infanticide—the decision by parents and physicians to deny lifesaving medical treatment (and sometimes nourishment) to handicapped babies. I had started looking into the subject because of conversations I'd had, in New York and elsewhere, with nurses and pediatric surgeons who felt that unless more public attention were paid to quiet killings, they would continue and perhaps increase, as if these newborns were still unborn, and therefore subject to the summary judgment of abortion.

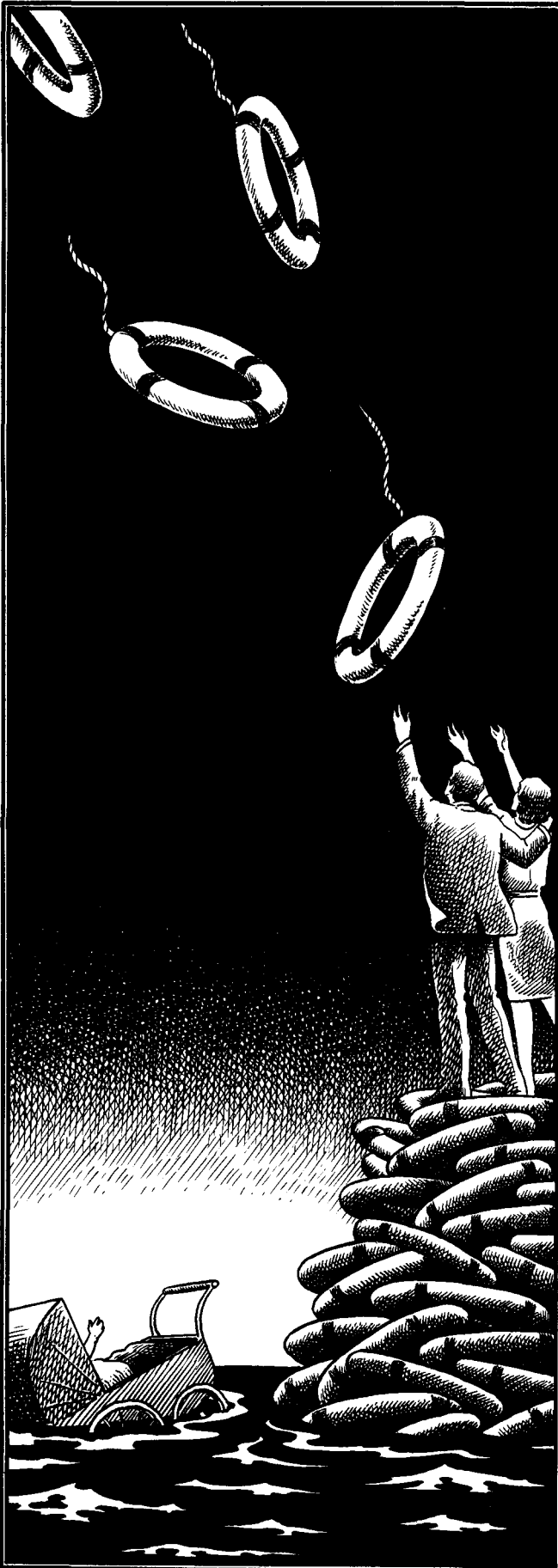
One specialist in the treatment of newborns has terminated so many brief lives that, as he told B. D. Colen, the science editor for *Newsday*, he has a recurring dream: "I've died and I'm going to Heaven, and as I go through the gates, I see what looks like this field of gently waving grass. When I look closely, it's babies, slowly undulating back and forth—the babies I've shut off."

A good many of those lives could not have been saved, because the infants were born dying. Even doctors and nurses who are critical of the ways in which irreversible decisions are made in neonatal intensive-care units would not want heroic measures to be taken in these and certain other cases: babies born with only a brainstem, for instance, or with Lesch-Nyhan syndrome, an incurable hereditary disorder that leads to mental retardation, uncontrollable spasms, and self-mutilation.

At issue are lives that could be saved, the lives of infants with such handicaps as Down's syndrome, cerebral palsy, and spina bifida. Spina bifida involves a lesion in the spinal column that can be repaired through surgery, the sooner after birth the better. Without surgery there is considerable likelihood of infection, which can lead to permanent brain damage. Nearly all children with spina bifida also have an accumulation of spinal fluid within the brain. Unless a shunt is inserted to drain the fluid, the pressure on the brain can and often does lead to mental retardation.

As a result of these medical procedures, however, along with knowledgeable follow-up treatment, children with spina bifida can grow up to be bright, productive adults,

Nat Hentoff writes about civil liberties for The New Yorker, the Village Voice, The Washington Post, and other publications. His most recent book on that subject is The First Freedom: The Tumultuous History of Free Speech in America.



who may need braces in order to walk. Yet death is the prescription some doctors give for newborns with spina bifida. The prediction is that the child will never walk, will be severely retarded, and will suffer progressively worse bladder and bowel problems. In one highly publicized case, that of Baby Jane Doe on Long Island, the physician chosen by the parents added that the child would be in constant pain throughout her dismal life.

The leading medical expert on spina bifida is Dr. David McLone, the chief of neurosurgery at Children's Memorial Hospital, in Chicago. McLone has successfully operated on hundreds of infants with spina bifida, and he and his staff follow the children for several years and perform indicated surgery and other therapy. He asserts that physicians who do not know enough about spina bifida leave infants with that handicap untreated in hospitals throughout the country. In an interview on CBS-TV's *Sunday Morning* last August, McLone said, "Physicians are making decisions not to treat certain numbers of these children on the basis of criteria that are invalid. They are assuming that by examining a newborn child they can predict the quality of life or how independent or how productive that child is going to be, how much stress that child is going to be on the family, how much of a burden on society. They make all of these judgments based on that initial exam, and almost every one of the criteria that they use to make that judgment is invalid."

Invalid or not, as a result of those judgments many infants with spina bifida and other handicaps are allowed to die. It is as if we were already living in that ideal special-care nursery envisioned (in the context of a discussion of quality-of-life issues) by Francis Crick, the 1962 Nobel laureate in medicine and physiology: "No newborn infant should be declared human until it has passed certain tests regarding its genetic endowment and . . . if it fails these tests, it forfeits the right to live."

No one knows exactly how many Baby Does forfeit their right to live each year. No death certificate is going to declare infanticide as the cause of an infant's departure. With regard to babies with Down's syndrome, Dr. Norman Fost, a professor of pediatrics at the University of Wisconsin, noted in the December, 1982, issue of *Archives of Internal Medicine*: "It is common in the United States to withhold routine surgery and medical care from infants with Down's syndrome for the explicit purpose of hastening death." With regard to infants otherwise handicapped, the President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine declared in its March, 1983, report, "Deciding to Forego Life-Sustaining Treatment": "Decisions to forego therapy are part of everyday life in the neonatal intensive care unit; *with rare exceptions, these choices have been made by parents and physicians without review by courts or any other body*" (emphasis added).

In consideration of the shock and grief of parents, such decisions must be private, the American Medical Association and most physicians insist. The American Civil Liberties Union tacitly agrees. In Baby Doe cases, after the

whistle has been blown by a nurse or a right-to-life organization, not once has an ACLU affiliate spoken for the infant's right to due process and equal protection under the law. Indeed, when the ACLU has become involved, it has fought resolutely for the parents' right to privacy. Baby Doe's own awful privacy, as he or she lies dying, is also thereby protected.

Along with my fellow civil libertarians, most liberals strongly support parents, and only parents, in these situations. It is hard to imagine anyone more powerless than a handicapped baby who has just been given the black spot, but to my knowledge no organization of liberals or civil-rights group has ever said a word about the rights of Baby Does. Nor has any feminist group, even though the civil rights and liberties being violated in these infanticides are not only those of males.

I have discovered, moreover, that most members of these groups do not take kindly to questions on the subject. Some liberals and feminists, for instance, have told me sharply that if I were to look more closely at the kinds of people trying to save those Baby Does, I would understand that such rescue efforts are a way to make women subservient again to those who would tell them what they can and cannot do with their own bodies.

It is true that the most prominent defenders of the Baby Does are such conservative hobgoblins as Ronald Reagan, the right-to-life squadrons, and the Reverend Jerry Falwell. Having picked up bad companions so early in life, the Baby Does indeed bear out the adage that people are judged by the company they keep.

After mighty internal struggles, a few liberals have decided that handicapped infants might, after all, have some constitutional rights independent of their parents' wishes for them. One such heretic, a professor of education with a history of passionate involvement in civil-liberties and civil-rights matters, told me, "For a long time I shut off on this one. If anybody asked, I gave the standard liberal line: 'At a time of such tragedy for the parents, only they have the right to decide. All we can do for them is protect the privacy of their decision.' But then, as part of some research I was doing, I began to talk to handicapped people about Baby Does. I found out how many of them had come close to being killed in the nursery because some doctor thought their 'quality of life' wouldn't be worth a damn. But their parents had rejected that advice, and here were these severely handicapped adults—tough, resilient, leading lives that, however you define that term, were not without 'quality.'"

MANY OF THE DISABLED HAVE SPOKEN FOR BABY Does, in *The Disability Rag* and others of their own publications, and in letters to magazines and newspapers. Indeed, one of the more compelling polemics in the "quality of life" debate was written, a decade ago, by a severely handicapped woman, Sondra Diamond. Her "Letter From a Vegetable," published in *Newsweek*, re-

quires a prologue, because it was one link in a chain of circumstances that began with an article in the October 25, 1973, issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

That article, "Moral and Ethical Dilemmas in the Special-Care Nursery," was the first in an American medical publication in which physicians admitted having withheld treatment from babies until they died. The killings had taken place in the special-care nursery of Yale-New Haven Hospital. (I say "killings" because, as Joseph Fletcher, a theologian who does not object to certain kinds of infanticide, has pointed out, "It is naive and superficial to suppose that because we don't 'do anything positively' to hasten a patient's death we have thereby avoided complicity in his death. Not doing anything is doing something.")

Drs. Raymond S. Duff and A. G. M. Campbell, the physicians who wrote the article, had withheld treatment from forty-three babies over a two-and-a-half-year period. Their report was in no way an act of contrition. They wanted to demonstrate that in certain cases one "management option" in the special-care nursery is death. Those for whom this option was chosen were infants "considered to have little or no hope of achieving meaningful 'humanhood.'" These decisions were made in consultation with the parents, who, Drs. Duff and Campbell pointed out, believed they would be relieved of enormous long-term emotional and financial stress if they chose that particular management option.

Among the infants thus doomed was a baby with Down's syndrome who had a routinely operable intestinal obstruction—a case very much like that of the Bloomington baby. Drs. Duff and Campbell explained in the article that "his parents thought that surgery was wrong for their baby and themselves. He died seven days after birth." He died because he was retarded, although no one had any way of knowing how retarded he would be. (In 1984 the poster of the National Organization on Disability was a photograph of Matthew Starr, of Baltimore, reading the Torah during his bar mitzvah. Matthew has Down's syndrome, but that service was not simplified for him. He also wrote and read the traditional speech given by a boy entering the adult Jewish religious community.)

At the end of their article Duff and Campbell, having discussed the ethical and legal implications of decisions (including ones in which they participated) to let infants die, wrote: "If working out these dilemmas in ways such as those we suggest is in violation of the law, we believe the law should be changed."

An authoritative guide in these particular legal matters is John A. Robertson, a professor of law at the University of Texas and the author of *The Rights of the Critically Ill*. Robertson asserts that an infant born with severe mental and physical disabilities has the same right to be treated as anyone else, new or old. That right, Robertson says, "does not depend on his IQ, physical abilities, or social potential." The only exceptions are "a few very extreme cases in which . . . the burdens of treatment outweigh the bene-

fits," as when the treatment inflicts severe pain and only delays death briefly. Otherwise, even though certain handicapped infants "appear from the perspective of 'normal' people to face a meaningless or greatly limited life," that is no justification "for denying them essential medical treatments."

Accordingly, Robertson says, parents who refuse treatment for infants with such handicaps as Down's syndrome and spina bifida "with the intent and result that they die" can be prosecuted for murder or manslaughter, not to mention child abuse and neglect. Physicians in these cases can also be prosecuted, for homicide, child neglect, and violation of child-abuse reporting laws (the parents should have been reported).

Yet Drs. Duff and Campbell, and the parents who agreed to the denial of treatment for their children, were not charged with any crime. Actually, Robertson says, "while parents of retarded children have been convicted for directly killing them, there has been only one prosecution of parents and doctors for nontreatment of defective newborns." In that case the charges were dismissed, because no one would testify at a preliminary hearing that the parents and doctors had ordered that the Baby Does—Siamese twins joined at the waist—be starved to death.

That prosecutions have been so rare is traceable to a widespread belief that decisions about the welfare of newborn infants should be made only by the parents and physicians. A more proximate factor is the infrequency with which these infant deaths become known outside the nursery. On occasion the refusal of treatment to a handicapped infant does become news—as with the Bloomington baby and, in 1983, with Baby Jane Doe on Long Island. But in neither of these cases were the parents prosecuted.

Very occasionally a court's attention is drawn to a Baby Doe who seems about to die. The hospital, unsure of its legal ground, may initiate the court action lest it be sued later for complicity in the killing of the infant. Or an outsider, learning of the imminent death from a nurse or someone else in the hospital, may try to bring a court action to save the child. No consistent pattern of court decisions has emerged, although treatment has been ordered more often than not in the relatively few cases that have come before a judge.

In one such case an infant was born with only one eye, no ear canals, a deformed esophagus, and almost certain brain damage. He soon developed convulsive seizures of unknown cause. The parents wanted him starved to death, and their doctor agreed. But Justice David Roberts, of the superior court in Cumberland County, Maine, ruled in February, 1974, that "at the moment of live birth, there does exist a human being entitled to the fullest protection of the law. The most basic right enjoyed by every human being is the right to life itself."

The doctor in the case had predicted that should the infant live, he would not have a life worth living. Said Justice Roberts: "The doctor's qualitative evaluation of the

value of the life to be preserved is not legally within the scope of his expertise." The baby died soon after the ruling, but Justice Roberts told me ten years later that he had no regrets about his decision, because the infant had been entitled to his chance to live.

But Justice Roberts would not have known about this Baby Doe if the hospital and, initially, the parents' doctor had not asked for a hearing because they wanted to treat the child (the doctor later changed his mind). No court intervened, however, in any of the forty-three infant deaths described by Drs. Duff and Campbell in their *New England Journal* article. No court knew about any of the cases. Indeed, no one except doctors reading that medical journal might have learned about the killings if *Newsweek* had not picked up the story.

In its coverage of death as a management option at Yale–New Haven Hospital, *Newsweek* used the term *vegetables* to describe some severely handicapped newborns who eventually died. Sondra Diamond wrote a letter to the magazine, and here is some of what she said:

I'll wager my entire root system and as much fertilizer as it would take to fill Yale University that you have never received a letter from a vegetable before this one, but, much as I resent the term, I must confess that I fit the description of a "vegetable" as defined in the article. . . .

Due to severe brain damage incurred at birth, I am unable to dress myself, toilet myself, or write; my secretary is typing this letter. Many thousands of dollars had to be spent on my rehabilitation and education in order for me to reach my present professional status as a Counseling Psychologist. My parents were also told, 35 years ago, that there was "little or no hope of achieving meaningful 'humanhood'" for their daughter [afflicted with cerebral palsy].

Have I reached "humanhood"? Compared with Doctors Duff and Campbell, I believe I have surpassed it!

Instead of changing the law to make it legal to weed out us "vegetables," let us change the laws so that we may receive quality medical care, education, and freedom to live as full and productive lives as our potentials allow.

Four years later, in 1977, Sondra Diamond wrote an afterword in *Human Life Review*. She told of being taken to the hospital with third-degree burns over 60 percent of her body when she was in her early twenties. "The doctors felt that there was no point in treating me because I was disabled anyway, and could not lead a normal life," she reported. "They wanted to let me die. My parents, after a great deal of arguing, convinced the doctors that I was a junior in college and had been leading a normal life. However, they had to bring in pictures of me swimming and playing the piano."

The doctors were still reluctant to treat her, but Sondra Diamond's parents insisted. Once she was again living what she considered a normal life, Diamond observed: "To take the time and effort to expend medical expertise on a person who is physically disabled seems futile to many members of the medical profession. Their handi-

work will come to naught, they think." Even so, she said, "I would not give up one moment of life in which I could have another cup of coffee, another cigarette, or another interaction with someone I love."

Some physicians' prophecies about imperfect babies are shown to be startlingly wrong when the child has a chance to live long enough to confound the prediction. A particularly vivid illustration of auguries turned upside down appeared as part of *Death in the Nursery*, a 1983 series on the Boston television station WNEV-TV. The segment focused on two classmates in a West Haven, Connecticut, elementary school, Jimmy Arria and Kimberly Mekdeci. The boy, born prematurely, had weighed only four and a half pounds at birth, contracted pneumonia a day later, and suffered seizures. The girl was born with spina bifida.

A pediatrician suggested to the parents of both infants that they choose death as the preferred management option. Kimberly Mekdeci's father remembers that doctor saying that his daughter would probably grow up to be a vegetable. The quality of Jimmy Arria's life, the doctor predicted, would be very poor.

Jimmy Arria is a good student; Kim is also bright. According to the parents of both children, the physician who counseled death back in the nursery was Dr. Raymond Duff.

Not all physicians approve of withholding treatment for the parents' and the baby's own good. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, shortly after the Duff-Campbell report had appeared, published a letter from Dr. Joan L. Venes and Dr. Peter R. Huttenlocher, of the Yale University School of Medicine:

As consultants to the newborn special-care unit, we wish to disassociate ourselves from the opinions expressed by [Duff and Campbell]. The "growing tendency to seek early death as a management option" that the authors referred to has been repeatedly called to the attention of those involved and has caused us deep concern. It is troubling to us to hear young pediatric interns ask first, "should we treat?" rather than "how do we treat?"

We are fearful that this feeling of nihilism may not remain restricted to the newborn special-care unit. To suggest that the financial and psychological stresses imposed upon a family with the birth of a handicapped child constitute sufficient justification for such a therapy of nihilism is untenable and allows us to escape what perhaps after all are the real issues—i.e., the obligation of an affluent society to provide financial support and the opportunity for a gainful life to its less fortunate citizens.

AFTER MONTHS OF TALKING TO PARENTS, DOCTORS, judges, and a number of the severely handicapped, I thought I had a reasonably clear sense of the scope of deliberate death in the nursery. But then I discovered a new frontier: a death row for infants in Oklahoma.

As Drs. Duff and Campbell had done, the physicians themselves told of the deaths they had caused, and once

again they spoke not in confession but in pride. The article, "Early Management and Decision Making for the Treatment of Myelomeningocele," appeared in the October, 1983, issue of *Pediatrics*, a publication of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Among the authors were Drs. Richard H. Gross, Alan Cox, and Michael Pollay.

Over a five-year period an experiment had been conducted at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. The subjects of the experiment were newborn infants with spina bifida. Each was evaluated by a team of physicians, nurses, physical and occupational therapists, a social worker, and a psychologist. The team decided, in each case, whether to recommend "active vigorous treatment" or to inform the parents that they did not consider them obligated to have the baby treated; the family could choose "supportive care only." Each infant in the first group was given all medically indicated treatment, including an operation to close the spinal lesion and the implanting of a shunt to drain spinal fluid from the brain. The unfortunate infants relegated to supportive care received no active medical treatment: no surgery, no antibiotics to treat infection, and no routinely administered sedation during the dying process that began inexorably with only supportive care.

Of the twenty-four infants who did not get active, vigorous treatment, none survived. The mean age at death was thirty-seven days. As the babies' physicians wrote in *Pediatrics*, "The 'untreated survivor' has not been a significant problem in our experience."

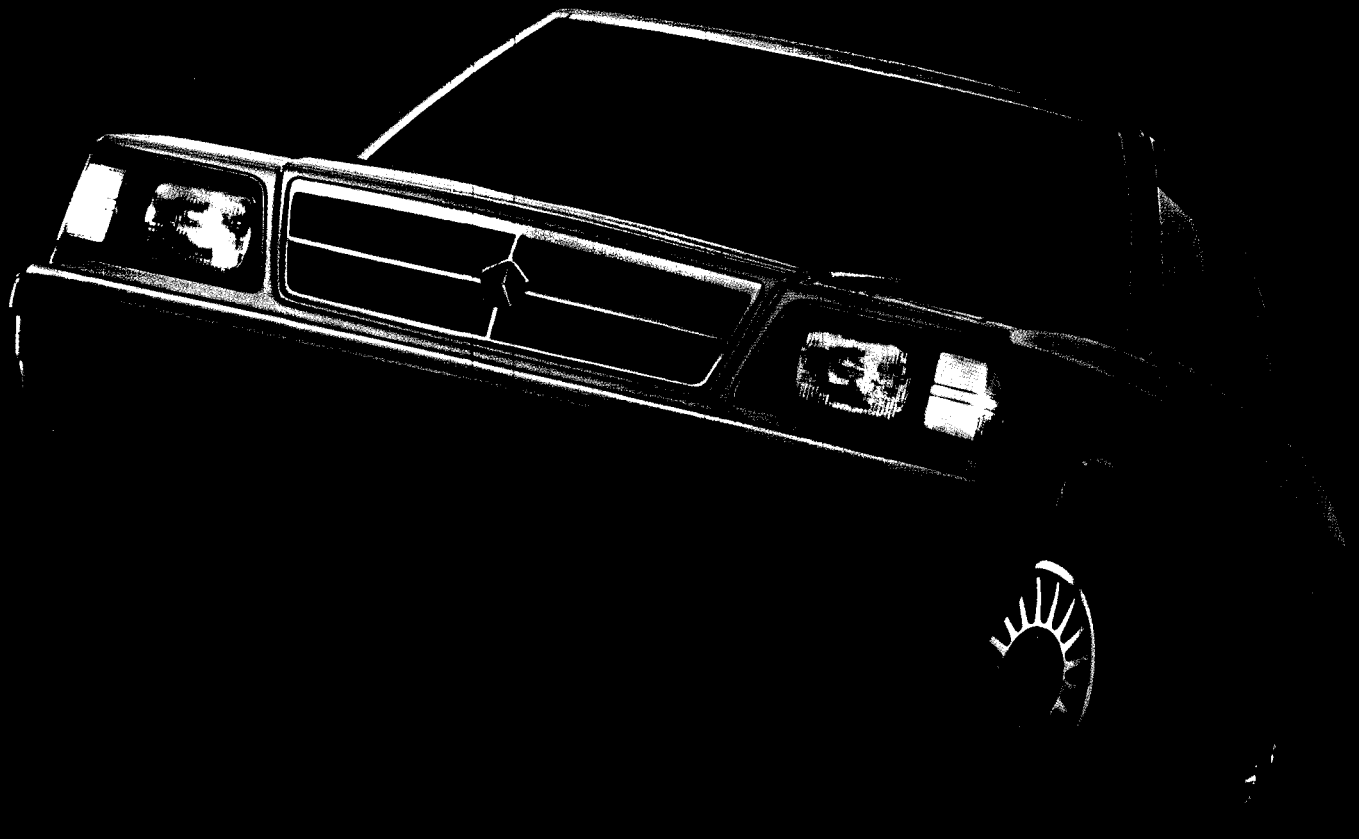
All but one of the infants who received active, vigorous treatment survived. The exception was killed in an auto accident.

To determine which infants were to be given death tickets, the medical team relied in substantial part on a "quality of life" formula: $QL = NE \times (H + S)$.

QL is the quality of life the child is likely to have if he is allowed to live. NE is the child's natural endowment (physical and intellectual). H is the contribution the child can expect from his home and family. S is the probable contribution to that handicapped child from society.

Since under this formula the patient's natural endowment is not the sole determinant of the medical treatment he gets, his chances of being permitted to stay alive can be greatly reduced if his parents are on the lower rungs of poverty. If, moreover, he is poor and has been born during the Reagan Administration—which prefers missiles to funding for the handicapped—the baby has been hit with a double whammy.

The creator of this powerful formula, which has influenced physicians around the country, is Dr. Anthony Shaw, the director of the Department of Pediatric Surgery at the City of Hope National Medical Center, in Duarte, California, and a clinical professor of surgery at the UCLA School of Medicine. He is also the chairman of the Ethics Committee of the American Pediatric Surgical Association. When I charged Dr. Shaw, during a television debate, with having created a means test for deciding which infants



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shall continue to live, he said he had intended no such thing. I asked him how else one could read his formula, and he said that its purpose was to help the parents. And, of course, the baby.

The last two elements of the formula, plainly, have nothing to do with medical judgments. Yet Martin Gerry, a civil-rights lawyer who was the director of the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare from 1975 to 1977, and who investigated the Oklahoma experiment, found that the parents of the infants involved "were told by representatives of the [medical] team that the proposed treatment/non-treatment alternative represented a medical judgment made by the team. The quality-of-life formula used was neither discussed with nor revealed to the parents."

An appalled reader of the article in *Pediatrics* was Dr. John M. Freeman, of the Birth Defects Treatment Center at Johns Hopkins Hospital, in Baltimore. Writing to *Pediatrics*, Freeman observed that while the Oklahoma medical team did prove that it "can get the infants to die quickly," such skill hardly qualifies as "the best available alternative" for the management of babies with spina bifida. Dr. Freeman added that the twenty-four infants who died "might also have done well and might have . . . walked with assistive devices, gone to regular school, been of normal intelligence, and achieved bowel and bladder control."

Should anyone be charged with criminal responsibility for their deaths? "The facts, just as written by the doctors themselves in the article, clearly demonstrate violation of both state and federal law," Martin Gerry says. "I think there are clearly violations of state child-abuse laws; there are violations of state criminal laws. I think what you have here is a conspiracy to commit murder." So far, however, no prosecutors have been interested in going after indictments. The Reagan Administration says it is unsure that it has sufficient legal basis—given the laws in force at the time of the Oklahoma experiment—for moving against doctors who withheld treatment.

Two years ago, however, after the death by starvation of the baby with Down's syndrome in Bloomington, Indiana, President Reagan angrily ordered the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to apply Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to handicapped infants. Section 504 says that under any program receiving federal assistance a handicapped person cannot be discriminated against because he or she is handicapped. Accordingly, handicapped infants must—like all other infants in the nursery—be fed and given appropriate medical treatment.

Regulations came down from Washington to enforce the application of 504 to handicapped babies. A hotline was set up so that anyone hearing that treatment or food was being denied a Baby Doe could report the details to federal investigators. And the Justice Department claimed that because of Section 504 it had the authority to review a Baby Doe's medical records in order to determine whether the baby was being discriminated against.

SO IT WAS THAT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT DEMANDED the records of Baby Jane Doe, the Long Island child born with spina bifida whose parents, acting on the advice of their doctors, had refused operations to close the spine and to insert a shunt in order to drain the fluid pressing on her brain. (Months later a shunt was implanted.)

The privacy of Baby Jane Doe was protected against the federal government by the attorney general of the State of New York, the New York Civil Liberties Union, the American Hospital Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and other medical groups. Supporting the Administration's position were the American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, the Association for Retarded Citizens, the Association for the Severely Handicapped, the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, Disabled in Action of Metropolitan New York, and the Disability Rights Union. They said they were on the side of Baby Jane Doe.

The federal government lost all the way, up to and including the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, where, on February 23, 1984, a panel decided 2 to 1 that if Congress meant Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act to apply to Baby Does, it ought to say so loud and clear. Until then the privacy of the parents and of the infant must not be violated.

In a strong dissent, overlooked by much of the press, Judge Ralph Winter wrote that the question wasn't even arguable. He drew an analogy to race. "A judgment not to perform certain surgery because a person is black is not a *bona fide* medical judgment. So too, a decision not to correct a life-threatening digestive problem because an infant has Down's syndrome is not a *bona fide* medical judgment." Both decisions are acts of discrimination. Buttressing the logic of this analysis, Winter added, was the fact that Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 had been patterned after, and is almost identical to, the anti-discrimination language of Section 601 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

No major newspapers that I know of published editorials lauding Judge Winter's dissent. Practically all of the nation's leading and lesser newspapers had claimed throughout the odyssey of Baby Jane Doe that the infant and her parents were being persecuted by a grossly intrusive and insensitive federal government.

Baby Jane Doe had been saved from Big Brother. "The federal government," said Richard Rifkin, a spokesman for the attorney general of the State of New York, "is now barred from conducting any investigation of medical decisions regarding defective newborns."

Liberals and civil libertarians cheered. This had been one of their few victories over Ronald Reagan.

Signs persisted, however, that Congress might come to the aid of Baby Does. On February 2, 1984, the House debated with much passion a bill to extend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. The amendments to one section broadened the definition of child abuse to include

the denial of medical treatment or nutrition to infants born with life-threatening conditions. The section also mandated that each state, to keep getting funds for child-abuse programs, would have to put in place a reporting system that could be alerted whenever a handicapped infant was being abused by denial of treatment or food.

Liberals led the debate against those provisions on the House floor, and conservatives, by and large, supported the measure. Particularly eloquent was Henry Hyde, an unabashed Tory, whose history of implacable opposition to abortion reinforced the view of many liberals, in and out of the House, that all of this compassion for Baby Does was actually propaganda to gain sympathy for the unborn.

"The fact is," Hyde said during the debate, "that . . . many children . . . are permitted to die because minimal routine medical care is withheld from them. And the parents who have the emotional trauma of being confronted with this horrendous decision, and seeing ahead a bleak prospect, may well not be, in that time and at that place, the best people to decide. . . . I suggest that a question of life or death for a born person ought to belong to nobody, whether they are parents or not. The Constitution ought to protect that child. . . . Because they are handicapped, they are not to be treated differently than if they were women or Hispanics or American Indians or black. [Their handicap] is a mental condition or a physical condition; but by God, they are human, and nobody has the right to kill them by passive starvation or anything else."

On the key vote concerning this section of the bill Congresswoman Geraldine Ferraro joined other renowned liberals in the House in voting against protections for handicapped babies, though most, to be sure, said they were supporting the right of parents to make life-or-death decisions about their infants and opposing government interference in that process. Among the others in opposition were such normally fierce defenders of the powerless as Peter Rodino, Henry Waxman, Don Edwards, Barney Frank, John Conyers, Thomas Downey, Charles Rangel, Robert Kastenmeier, Gerry Studds, George Crockett, and Barbara Mikulski.

The vote on expanding the definition of child abuse to include the neglect of handicapped infants was 231 to 182 in favor. Not until July, however, did the Senate pass a bill protecting the lives of Baby Does. An unusually ecumenical team of senators sponsored the bill: Orrin Hatch, Alan Cranston, Christopher Dodd, Jeremiah Denton, Don Nickles, and Nancy Kassebaum. Edward M. Kennedy was involved until nearly the end.

Handling the day-to-day maneuvering were members of the staffs of various senators. They were continually fearful that the fractious coalition of medical, right-to-life, and disability-rights organizations that had to agree on the language of the bill would fall apart. Yet at the end the AMA was the only medical group to walk out. Its representative had kept insisting on the need to allow physicians to make "quality of life" decisions as to whether an infant should

live or die. Staying behind and signing the agreement were, among other medical organizations, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Physicians, and the American Nurses Association.

As finally passed, the Senate bill (which, with a few modifications, was accepted by the House in conference) redefines child abuse and neglect, for purposes of this federal statute, to include "the withholding of medically indicated treatment from disabled infants with life-threatening conditions." No heroic measures are required, however, if treatment would merely prolong dying and would be "virtually futile in terms of the survival of the infant," or if the baby "is chronically and irreversibly comatose."

Under this Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act each state, in order to get federal child abuse and neglect grants, is required to create a system for reporting to state child-protection agencies cases in which infants are being denied treatment. As a last resort these agencies have the authority to "initiate any legal remedies" needed to prevent such a child from being killed. In effect, this means that Baby Does have rights independent of the rights of their parents. If they are not born dying or irreversibly comatose, handicapped infants, as persons under the Constitution, are entitled by federal statute to due process and equal protection under the law.

Meanwhile, the American Medical Association is likely to test all this in court, having already indicated its preferred approach to the Baby Doe question. On June 20 delegates to the AMA's 133rd annual convention, in Chicago, voted to support the concept of "local option" for Baby Does. That is, they wish communities and hospitals to have the legal right to set their own life-or-death standards for handicapped infants. Baby Does to come are not out of danger. Parents as well as doctors will be trying to get the new law struck down.

One of the first things I did when the bill passed was to send the news to a woman in Mount Airy, Maryland, who has been much dismayed at the infanticides in the nurseries in her county. She told me of going to a hospital seminar on the subject a couple of years ago and listening to the head of a neonatal nursery staff complain that it was awfully hard on her nurses when a baby deprived of treatment took fifteen days to die. Other infants, she felt the lecturer had implied, were more accommodating.

This woman in Mount Airy had written to me last summer: "As a social studies teacher of ancient civilizations, I conducted classroom discussions covering the topic 'Ideals of Sparta vs. Ideals of Athens.' It was always . . . a shock for my students to learn that the Spartans, who valued 'body' over 'mind,' could be as callous and cruel as to leave their deformed newborns on the rocky hillsides to die.

"In this matter, it would seem, we have not come very far. What shall be written of us in years hence? That we merely brought this barbaric practice indoors?" □

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A Short Story



DESTINY

BY LOUISE ERDRICH

"I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE THEY PUT THE DAMN radishes in Jell-O," says my friend and employee, Celestine Duval, when I mention visiting her son, Norris.

Yet that very night my shop catches fire, and she is out of a job until the insurance comes through. It is December. The nearest hydrant was frozen when they put a wrench to it, but I am lucky. Because I have a thick sliding door between the shop and the back room where I live, the only damage to my living quarters was stains from a few gray plumes of smoke blown up the walls.

"They lend an atmosphere," Celestine tells me.

She talks like a restaurant because Norris has opened a steakhouse in Argus, North Dakota, where he lives among the Swedes. This has led to Celestine's objections to the radishes. She has got a bug up her nose about the Swedes and their customs involving food. She went down to help Norris at the grand opening not so long ago, but she could not stand their habit of slicing odd things into the Jell-O.

Now, since the fire payment won't arrive for a week or so and the workmen won't start on the interior, we decide to close the shop and take a trip. We must get our minds off this disaster. We decide to go to Argus and visit Norris, his wife, Adele, and their daughter with the terrible name.

Wallacette is named after Adele's father, who died in the ninth month of Adele's pregnancy and left his daughter's mind unhinged with grief. Nothing that Norris said could persuade Adele to name their daughter something halfway normal. Wallacette she became.

Like her mother, Wallacette is big and imposing, with a large-jawed grin full of teeth. At eleven years old she towers above the rest of the children in her class, and she is mainly interested in fiercely pursuing love. To get boy-friends, she knocks boys down and grinds their faces in the snowy grit. To get girls, she ties the string waistbands of their dresses to her own dress strings, and drags them around the playground until they promise to write her a note.

The nuns don't know what to do with Wallacette, nor do her parents, for she is strong-willed and determined to get her way. These same traits, however, make her a favorite with Celestine and myself, for we think that she has got

spunk, and we always look forward to what surprises each visit with her brings. But to visit Wallacette we must also contend with Norris and, worse, grim Adele, who insists that we help her out in their steakhouse. The Poopdeck is the name of the place. I can't tell you why, except that this name was Adele's idea too.

The name does have to be an oceangoing kind of name, we admit. To save money on the renovations, Norris put in portholes rather than windows. Then he painted the outside white and blue, like a ship, and built a little captain's steering deck up top. He can't disguise the square shape of the building, though. It certainly doesn't look like it could sail anywhere.

After two hours of driving, we arrive in Argus. The Poopdeck's parking lot is jammed. Furry green plastic branches frame the portholes, decorations for the holidays. Within each porthole glows one red electric candle.

"Celestine," I say, "let's go somewhere else for lunch."

She is wearing a white turban on her head, and earrings that look like tiny red plungers. Christmas plungers. Her slanting eyes are sharp yellow, and the little purple spider veins in her cheeks have darkened like stitches.

"If we help out, they'll feed us afterward. All we can eat," she says.

But it's the helping I can do without.

It is Saturday, however, and we are pleased to see that Wallacette is behind the counter. Her job is to hand out paper boat flags and red and green Lifesavers to the children who eat at the Poopdeck. This she does with earnest enjoyment. Sometimes she forces the candy so eagerly on little children that they cry out in fear of her stony jaw and gleaming teeth.

She sees us. She ducks under the counter and hurls herself forward. I can hear the sharp *oof!* as the air is knocked out of Celestine's lungs. It is hard to think of Celestine as anyone's grandmother. But she seems right as Wallacette's. The girl's pale legs are brawny as a wrestler's. She wears dirty white anklets. A strange light shines in her face. Hunched in her black coat, under the turban with its blazing clip, Celestine looks strange too, and the same light glows within her eyes.

We join the cooks at the steam tables in the back. I am stationed at the deep-fryer, with wire baskets and bags of frozen products—fries, shrimp, onion rings, breaded fillets. The fish is always popular because of the boat theme, which is carried on in the menu.

Louise Erdrich is the author of Love Medicine, a novel. Her earlier Atlantic story, "Saint Marie," has been chosen for inclusion in Prize Stories 1985: The O. Henry Awards.



"Old Tar Special," the waitress yells. "Clams Casanova! Fish Waikiki!"

Someone orders a Spinnaker Salad and a Lighthouse malt—a regular malt with a cherry "light."

I lower a basket of fantail shrimp into the popping grease. This is Wallacette's favorite item on the menu. I hear her voice through the cook's window, deep and loud.

"Sure you like candy. You do too. Take these."

A child's thin wail grows and is hushed. I peek out. The boy is hoisted into his mother's arms and carried out, staring over her shoulder, lip hanging. He doesn't know it, but his character has been strengthened by this encounter. Wallacette stands before another child. This time she is

poking a striped paper flag through the child's buttonhole. The child stands stiffly, paralyzed, as if the slightest movement would cause the big girl to drive the tiny wooden pole into her heart.

"Don't be a sissy," she booms. "You like candy!"

When the noon rush is over, the three of us sit down in the end booth. The candles blaze in the little round port-holes. Nets are draped across the walls. Wallacette has fried twenty-four fantail shrimp to place on a bed of coleslaw for herself. I am having the ham and pineapple rings. Celestine is having a steak and browned onions. She would normally accompany this with a salad, but not here. She won't go near the salad bar, because of Adele. In the

cooler, Adele's creative Jell-O salads rest in brilliantly colored sheets. They are filled with walnuts, chopped celery, macaroni, onions, miniature pastel marshmallows, and, worst of all, sliced radishes.

"I'm sure glad you came back," Wallacette says to her grandmother. "Dad was worried that we'd have to come visit you."

The last time Celestine visited Norris and Adele, the nasty confrontation over the Jell-O took place. That is why, so far, Adele has avoided us.

"You're the one I came to see," Celestine tells her granddaughter. "Your mother and father can get along perfectly good without me."

"I guess they can," says Wallacette, who inherited Celestine's honesty. "But not me."

An expression that I've never seen forms on Celestine's face. She is watching Wallacette. It is as though her face is liable to break into pieces, as though the stitching spider veins barely manage to hold her face together. I am confused by this look, and then I realize what it is. Tenderness. The heart of Celestine is cold as clay, something even she'll admit. But she feels a true tenderness for Wallacette.

"You're in time!" Wallacette shouts suddenly. Light breaks over her broad pancake face. Her stony brow lifts. "You'll get to see our Christmas play!"

This is pleasing to both of us.

We enjoy Wallacette's successes and have already seen her in a piano recital, playing "Song of the Volga Boatmen" with tremendous expression. Celestine is chewing her steak eagerly, with pride and enthusiasm, for Wallacette has revealed to us that she will play a leading role.

"I am Joseph, father of the Christ child," she states. Then she grins, long and huge.

MARRIED LOVE

As they sat and talked beneath the boundary trees
In the abandoned park, neither one mentioning
Her husband, or his wife, it seemed as though
Their summer shadows had detached themselves
In the confusion of those thousand leaves: but no more
Than they could call those shadows back from the air,
Could they ignore the lives they had undone,
And would undo once more, that afternoon,
Before giving in to what they knew, had always known . . .
And yet, in turning away, what they would say was not
That thing, but something else, that mild excuse
That lovers use of how things might have been
Had they met somewhere else, or in some better time,
Were they less like themselves than what they are.

—Sherod Santos

At first I think it's awful that they picked a little girl to play the father of Christ. Then I imagine Wallacette wearing a long grizzled beard and a coarse robe. I see the carpenter's maul wielded in her fist. She will be convincing.

"*The Donkey of Destiny* is the name of this play," she tells us. Her face changes suddenly. "I hate the donkey."

The light goes out in the window. I distinctly hear Wallacette's teeth clench together and gnash. I've never heard the sound of gnashing teeth before, only read of it in books. Now I realize why this gnashing of teeth is mentioned so often. It is ominous and frightening to hear.

ADELE AND NORRIS HAVE MADE THEIR BASEMENT over into what they call a recreation center. A Hamm's beer lamp that shows a canoe on an endlessly revolving lake hangs off the side wall. This lamp makes Celestine raise her eyebrows and bend toward me.

"No comment," she whispers. We both dislike the lamp, with its foolish repetition, on sight. But we do not hurt any feelings. We smile and nod at Norris.

At one end of the room is a large cabinet television and a plush couch. In the middle of the room is a pool table that, as Norris now informs us, opens into a bed for guests. Norris seems anxious to demonstrate its double use, and so Celestine and I take our places against the wood-grain paneled walls while he struggles with the pool table. Norris is a small, washed-out, balding man. He is like a version of his mother, left too long in the water. But he is kinder than Celestine, and he wants very much to please us. Hinges creak and springs vibrate as he fiddles with the table. A loose ball rolls through the works. Norris slams his fist to dislodge a hidden latch, and the top springs up like the lid of a box. Then Norris bats a panel loose, and the bed folds into being. Sheets and pillows are secured, and we are ready for the night.

"I'll set the thermostat up for you," Norris says, wiping his brow, looking very much relieved. "Do you think you'll be all right down here?"

"As long as the table doesn't fold up on us," Celestine says. She is eyeing the bed suspiciously. I know that the ball is still loose inside of the pool-table bed, and that makes me a little hesitant. I've never heard this, but I can guess it is unlucky to sleep in a bed with what might be an eight ball folded up in its works. Still, we have no choice. Norris waves from the basement stairs. When he is gone, Celestine removes her shoes and turban and sits down carefully on her side of the bed.

"You want to hear the truth of the matter?" she says. "Wallacette loves the donkey."

I don't understand this at first. I have forgotten about the donkey in the play. But Celestine goes on to explain.

"Wallacette tried to catch the boy who plays the donkey—the head, not the rear end, that is. So far he has outsmarted her. This makes her violent."

"We must tell her to go easy on the boy," I counsel.

Celestine seems to agree.

"Say it with flowers," she says abruptly, with a fierce nod.

I wonder, when she says this, if either of us knows enough to say what love is all about. Our husbands are long deceased. At one time we must have loved them. But for me love was not said with flowers, at least not until he died. Every spring now I change the artificial roses on his grave.

FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS OF OUR VISIT ADELE continues to elude us, while Norris is always late to get somewhere. We find evidence of Adele in fresh coffee, sweet buns, and little notes pinned or taped on various items in the house.

"Don't touch the color tuner" is taped to the front of their television. "I'm saving the lemon bars for tonight" is taped on the refrigerator door. "Use the striped towels" is pinned to the correct towels in the bathroom. Celestine laughs harshly every time she comes across another bold printed order from Adele.

"Out-and-out gall," she says, crumpling the bits of paper.

I get to wishing that the two of them would settle their account. It would make things much nicer for Norris, myself, and Wallacette. Only those two, Celestine and Adele, halfway enjoy their mortal combat.

When the morning of the play dawns, we are anxious and excited. Even Norris has heightened color. Wallacette's hair is curled with an electric iron, though it will be covered with a wig. She bundles up in a green pile coat and barges down the road. Norris and Adele drive off, leaving us alone in the house.

"There's a potluck dinner after the play," Celestine tells me. "I'm going to make a special secret dish."

Then she whisks herself off into the kitchen and hands me a cup of coffee and a bun through a crack in the door. I feel like a fifth wheel going downstairs to sit alone, first thing in the morning. I switch on the television, but the face of The Morning Hostess is pulsating blue, and I do not dare disobey Adele's note and adjust the dial.

THE GYMNASIUM THAT NIGHT IS ALIVE AND NOISY. The lights blaze in their steel-mesh covers. Folding chairs are lifted from a cart by dads with rolled-up sleeves and are added to the back rows. Mink-collared grandmothers are settled in firmly, ready to enjoy the pageant. The nuns are whispering together in their navy-blue veils. The run-down parish gym is also used as a dining hall and for bingo and budget meetings. The purple velveteen curtain is shabby, a castoff from the public school. Celestine insists that we sit far up front. In elbowing through the nuns we lose Adele and Norris.

"Accidentally on purpose," Celestine sniffs. We sit. She has already delivered her secret recipe, a long foil-covered pan, to the school kitchen. During the potluck dinner this

dish will be unveiled. Celestine has taped Adele's name where it cannot be missed; she will be known as the author of the great work. For some reason I am uneasy that she has done this. Generosity is not her style.

The noise all around us mounts, and then suddenly it hushes. The lights go down. There is the sound of programs rustling. We have already found and admired the printed presence of Wallacette's name.

When the curtains open, the spotlight shows a boy wearing a knit poncho and a huge sombrero, of the kind that people who have been to Mexico hang on their walls. This boy makes a long sad speech about his friend the donkey, whom he must sell to the glue factory in order to buy food. On a darkened set of bleachers behind him a vague chorus laments the donkey's fate.

The boy pulls the rope he has been twisting in his hands, and the donkey bumbles out of the wings. It is, of course, a makeshift donkey. It is wearing gray pants and tennis shoes. The body is barrel-shaped and lopsided, and the papier-mâché head lolls as if the donkey were drunk. The mouth, painted open in a grin, and the slanted, black-rimmed eyes give it a strange expression of cruelty.

Parents ooh and ahh, but some look startled. The donkey is an unpleasant creature. Its dyed burlap hide looks moth-eaten. One ear is long and one is short. Celestine must be the only person in the crowd who thinks the donkey is cute. "Oh, look at it prance," she whispers. Her long yellow Tartar eyes gleam softly beneath the flashing buckle of her turban. Her gloves are in a tight ball, like socks. She smiles as the boy and his donkey start out on the long road to the glue factory. Tragedy, her favorite element, is in the air. Her eyes blaze when the chorus wails.

"*Amigos!* We are *amigos!*" the boy shouts from beneath the sombrero. Then they slowly begin to walk across the stage. They are weeping. But before they reach the glue factory, Saint Joseph appears.

Saint Joseph has a long beard of spray-painted cotton, and an old piece of upholstery fabric is tied to her head. She wears a long brown terry-cloth bathrobe that might belong to Norris. Her feet are bare. As in my vision of her, she is carrying a wooden maul. She looks grimmer than the mild church statues, and more powerful. I believe in her. The donkey sidles up to her with its evil, silly grin. She stands before it with her legs spread wide, balancing on the balls of her feet. All I can see of the boy whom, according to Celestine, she loves is a pair of gray corduroy knees and frayed black tennis shoes. Wallacette grabs the donkey around the neck and the gray legs twitch for a moment in the air. Then she sets the donkey down and says her lines to the donkey's *amigo*.

"Young man, where are you going with this donkey?"

"I must sell it to the glue factory, for my family is hungry," the boy says sadly.

"Perhaps I can help you out," Wallacette says. "My wife, Mary, myself, and our little boy, Baby Jesus, want to flee King Herod. My wife could ride this donkey if you would sell it."

"I will sell my donkey to help you," the boy shouts. "He will not be killed!"

"Of course not," Wallacette says. "We will only ride him across the desert to Egypt."

She takes some large coins made of crushed aluminum foil from her bathrobe pocket and gives them to the boy.

And so the transaction is accomplished. The Donkey of Destiny now belongs to Wallacette, who tries to pat its snarling papier-mâché muzzle. But then the episode occurs that we hope will not mar the mind of our favorite granddaughter for life. The donkey balks. Is this in the script? I glance at Celestine, wondering, but her look has narrowed to a flashlight focus of premonitions.

"Come along, little donkey," Saint Joseph says, through gritted teeth. She pulls, perhaps a bit roughly, at the rope on its neck. Suddenly a hand snakes from the front of the donkey's neck flap and rips the rope out of the grasp of a surprised Saint Joseph.

"Give it back!" she shouts in quick rage. "You're mine!"

The audience twitters; a few loud male guffaws are heard. Saint Joseph hears the audience—laughing at her! Fury tightens in her arms and she raises the maul high. I know what will happen. The audience gapes. Then she brings it down clean, like swift judgment, on the cardboard skull of the beast.

The front of the donkey drops. The head flies off, smashed. The last of that scene that we see is Saint Joseph standing in criminal shock, maul gripped tight, over the motionless body of a towheaded boy.

The curtain has closed and the audience is in a rumble of consternation. A fat, blonde, hysterical woman, the mother of the donkey's felled front end, flies down the aisle. Adele and Norris are nowhere to be seen.

"Come!" Celestine says, hoisting her handbag on her elbow. "Or the nuns will take it out of her hide!"

We leave the chairs, find the side stage door, and slip behind the curtains. Angels and shepherds are standing in dismayed clumps. The painted wood silhouettes of sheep and cattle look stupidly baffled. We see Adele, wide and flat-rumped in a red suit, and Norris, with his bald man's ring of hair, standing with the principal nun, gesturing and gabbling excitedly. The wounded boy is nowhere to be seen. Wallacette is gone too.

Adele sees us in the wings and strides over to Celestine.

"Mother," she says, "go home."

"Where's Wallacette?" Celestine asks, ignoring her daughter-in-law's order.

"She ran out the back door of the gym," Norris says bleakly, "and that's the last anyone has seen of her."

"Get out a search party, then!" Celestine says. "She's barefoot in the snow!"

But no search party forms at her words.

As it turns out, Wallacette was headed home. When we arrive there, she is sitting on the living room coffee table with her feet by the heat ducts.

"Young lady!" Adele cries out, marching toward her, but Norris gets there first.

"Wait," he says, "I think she's hurt."

Sure enough, the rare tear is in her eye. She sits in a lump, clutching her play beard, shaking with inner sobs. In Norris's bathrobe she looks, oddly, like an ordinary, middle-aged man. Her face is pale, streaked with misery, and her small blue eyes are dull and still. Adele and Norris look awed, watching her, and do not approach and hug her or pat her, as normal parents might. Perhaps they have never seen her cry before.

Celestine, however, kneels down next to her, and then suddenly, fiercely, she lunges and catches the girl full across the chest and neck with a stranglehold. I expect this to be the moment Wallacette breaks down. It will be good for the girl to shed real tears, I think sympathetically. But instead of melting and crying, Wallacette charges suddenly from the room like a bull, running right over her grandmother. Celestine goes tumbling in a black heap on the carpet, and a door down the hall slams. Adele follows, to pound on the door and reason with her daughter. Norris stays, bending apologetically over his mother, who looks perversely delighted with what has happened. She pushes Norris away and lifts herself up.

"Grandma's girl" is all she says, adjusting her turban.

THAT NIGHT, AS WE ARE LYING SIDE BY SIDE ON THE fold-out couch downstairs, I realize that something still bothers me, something that I wonder about. So I ask Celestine about the special secret dish that was to be placed among the others at the potluck dinner after the Christmas play.

"What was it?" I ask. "Was it your special chocolate bran cake?"

"It was not," Celestine says, waking quickly at my question. The sound of joy lights her voice. She crows.

"What?"

"The Jell-O. My special secret dish."

Of course I ask her what it was that made the Jell-O so special.

Bold as a weasel, she turns in the dark and fixes me with her proud, gleaming stare. She stares a long time, to let my anticipation sink in.

"Nuts and bolts," she finally says. "Washers of all types. I raided Norris's toolbox for the special ingredients."

Then she turns on her back to gloat up into the dark. I turn away from her, pretending to sleep.

But from my side of the bed I cannot escape the changing scenery of the beer lamp, still lit. I am forced to watch it revolve. So I watch, and after a while it isn't irritating anymore. In fact, it is almost as soothing as any real scenery you might find, and has the added advantage that you can relax and watch it in a dark room. Again and again I see the canoe leave the Minnesota lakeshore and venture through the water. The pines along the lake stand green-black and crisp. The water shimmers, lit within. The boat travels. I can almost see the fish rise, curious, beneath its shadow. □



FIRST ENCOUNTERS

IGOR STRAVINSKY AND W. H. AUDEN

WHEN STRAVINSKY INVITED Auden to come to Hollywood (from New York) in November, 1947, to work on the projected opera *The Rake's Progress*, Auden was, by his own admission, scared stiff. He had greatly admired the composer ever since, at age sixteen, he had bought *Three Easy Pieces*. But a week is a long time. Stravinsky might well turn out to be a tempestuous Russian prima donna. Should he, Auden, pack a dinner jacket? Kiss hands on arrival *à la Russe*?

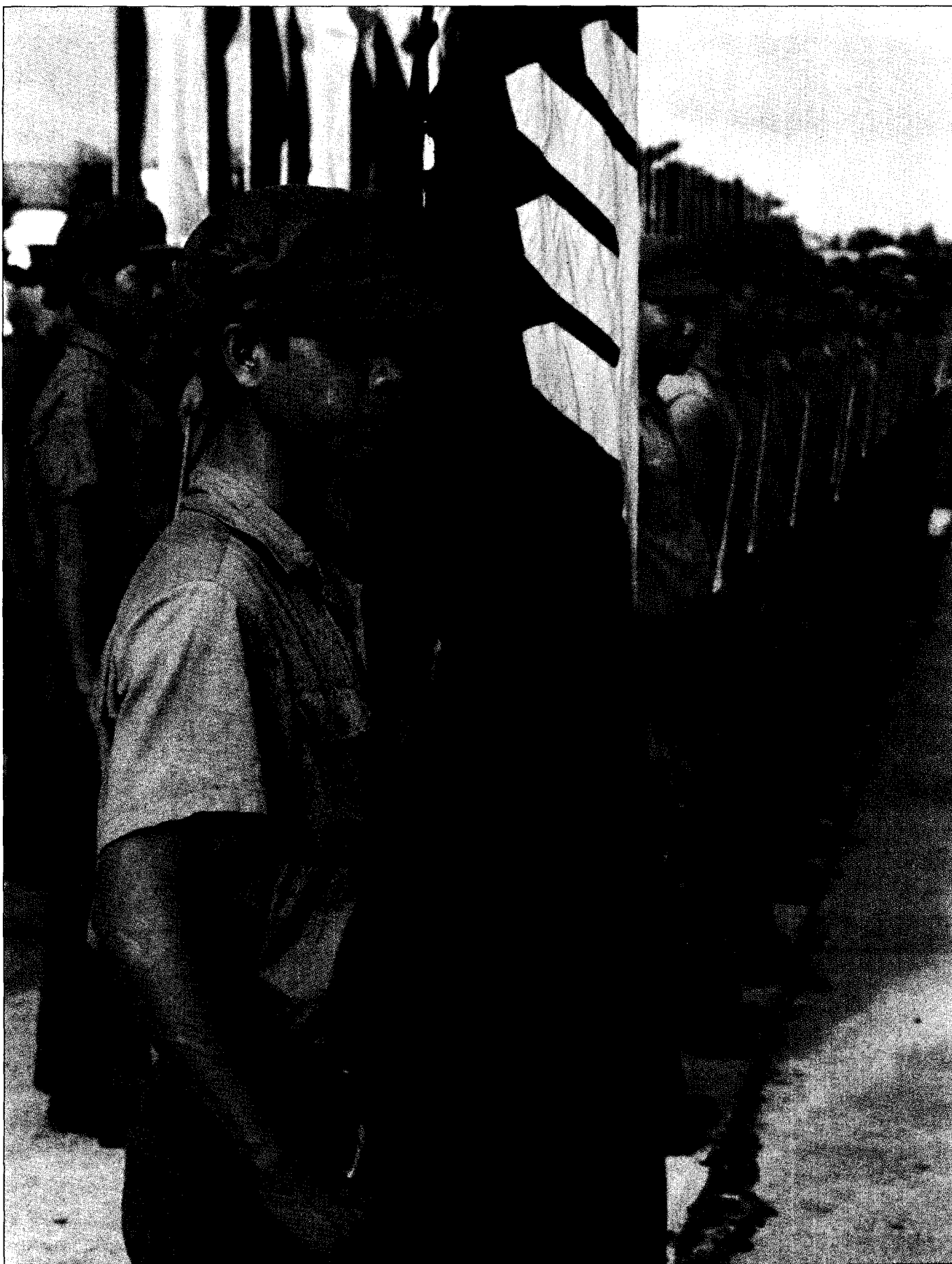
On the other coast Igor and Vera were experiencing similar qualms. Modern English poetry was not within the composer's expertise, but he had been assured (by his neighbor Aldous Huxley) that Wystan was the best and would produce a superb libretto. The question thus became not how good he was but how tall. Would he or would he not fit on the couch in the den?

Auden arrived, and it was immediately apparent that he would not, but it was also apparent that it wouldn't matter. He consumed an enormous dinner and gulped

down quantities of wine. Exactly at 10:30 he was ready for bed. The fatherly Stravinsky, who had sons about Auden's age, brought a chair and pillows to extend the couch, and Auden retired. At eight he was up and ready—after a little coffee topped with whisky—for the day's work.

In fact, the two brilliant innovators—each with a strong work ethic—got along quite well. If the proper, dapper little composer was taken aback by his guest's careless attire and the maid's report that the soap and towels in his bath were never touched, and if the poet, accustomed to a solitary cat, was unprepared for forty garrulous parrots and lovebirds, the two nevertheless delighted in each other's company. *The Rake* progressed. The scenario completed, Auden returned to New York, but correspondence flourished. Acts I and II flew westward, and by the time they all met again, the following March, the composer was smothering the poet with Russian bear hugs, and Auden was referring to him and Vera affectionately as "the Stravs."

—Nancy Caldwell Sorel



PENELOPE BONNECARRERE/SYGMA

MEMBERS OF THE HENG SAMRIN ARMY PRESENT THE NATIONAL FLAG

*Why did Vietnam invade Cambodia six years ago,
and why does it continue to occupy the country despite the intensification of the resistance?*

VIETNAM'S VIETNAM

BY STEPHEN J. MORRIS

FEW NATIONS IN modern history have suffered a fate as terrible as that endured by what used to be known as Cambodia. Cambodia's recent past has included a five-year war, which began in April of 1970, followed by a Communist revolution, which lasted until 1978, followed by foreign invasion and famine. All told, these calamities killed somewhere between two and three million Cambodians from 1970 to 1980, which was between 20 and 35 percent of the pre-war population.

Approximately 75 to 80 percent of these deaths occurred in peacetime. At least three to four times the number of people died during the three and a half years of "peace" wrought by the Khmer Rouge, the Cambodian Communist revolutionary movement led by Pol Pot, as died from the bullets, rockets, shells, and bombs of the previous five years of war. Perhaps half as many died of starvation during the first year of the country's "liberation" by Vietnam, which invaded Cambodia in December of 1978, as died in those same five years of war. These deaths were not the product of the "American war," as radical apologists have suggested. They were the result of the policy calculations of the victors—the Communist regimes that won the wars in Indochina.

Today the suffering of the Cambodian people continues. It may not involve enormous population losses like those of the previous decade—though Cambodians still die in battle for one side or another. But there is deep psychological suffering all the same, because Cambodia, after twenty-five years of independence, is once again under the direct occupation of a hated foreign army.

The Khmer Rouge, the regime that ruled Cambodia—



AT A PARADE IN PHNOM PENH

or Democratic Kampuchea, as it was officially titled—from April, 1975, to January, 1979, was not a small clique of "fascists," as Vietnamese propaganda has suggested. It was, rather, like the regime in Hanoi, committed to a form of Marxism-Leninism. Unlike the Hanoi regime, however, the Khmer Rouge was inspired by the agrarian communism of Mao Tse-tung's China—in particular Mao's abortive

Great Leap Forward of 1958–1959 and his Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966–1969. The policies introduced inside Democratic Kampuchea—the mass executions, the depopulation of the cities, the abolition of money, the communization of all aspects of social life, and the suppression of religion—took Maoist concepts to an extreme. But these policies were carefully planned by the central Party leadership, and systematically pursued by a disciplined Communist Party and its military apparatus at the grass roots. Indeed, these policies had already been tried out in the "liberated zones" of Cambodia long before the war against the Khmer Republic was completed. (Khmer is the linguistic and racial designation of the dominant ethnic group in Cambodia.)

When the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia, they were at first regarded as liberators who had broken the iron grip of the Khmer Rouge over the Cambodian population. Initially they introduced conciliatory policies, such as the dissolution of the large communes, the reunion of divided families, a return to the native villages, and free religious practice. But the popular sense of relief did not last.

In 1979 the Vietnamese leaders were responsible for a widespread famine that killed tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of Cambodians. The invasion prevented the planting of the 1979 rice crop. Also, in pursuing the retreating Khmer Rouge, the Vietnamese army adopted a "scorched earth" policy in many areas. By May of 1979 most of Cambodia's grain reserves had been con-

Stephen J. Morris is an Australian who visited the resistance-controlled areas of Cambodia in 1983 and 1984. He is currently a researcher at the Institute of East Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.

sumed. The country was on the edge of famine. Because of the deterioration of the transportation infrastructure—airports, docks, cranes, and trucks—during the Khmer Rouge era, adequate international relief aid could not get through. The little aid that did trickle in was partly siphoned off by the Vietnamese army. Realizing this, several international relief agencies, including the Red Cross and the International Rescue Committee, advocated feeding the starving population by means of a “land bridge” of trucks coming in from Thailand. Their plea was tardily supported by the Carter Administration. But the Vietnamese, fearing that their authority would be undermined by the independent activities of capable international relief organizations, and fearing that such a “land bridge” would also feed the Khmer Rouge, angrily refused the offer. In order to justify their decision, the Vietnamese Communists denied that there was a food shortage. In spite of this decision by Hanoi, on the Thai border the Khmer Rouge and some

lucky civilians were fed, but in the interior tens of thousands of Cambodian civilians died of starvation. The CIA estimate is that 350,000 civilians died in 1979. The extent of starvation has been challenged in an important new book by William Shawcross, *The Quality of Mercy*. But Shawcross does not know how many thousands actually did die.

The Vietnamese army, rather than giving the Cambodians a chance to choose their own leaders, as the United Nations was demanding, installed a regime trained and chosen by the Hanoi politburo. It thus became obvious very quickly that the Vietnamese role in Cambodia was a colonial one. By the use of conscription the Vietnamese have built an indigenous army—popularly referred to as the Heng Samrin army, after its nominal head—of about 30,000. But that army is virtually useless as a fighting force on behalf of the Vietnamese. Fraternization with anti-Vietnamese resistance forces—which sprung up all over the country as soon as the Vietnamese occupation began—has become endemic, with agreements between the sides not to engage each other.

Hanoi's failure to construct a viable surrogate army in Cambodia can be attributed to two factors. The first is widespread resentment among ordinary Cambodians at Vietnamese military and political control over all major institutions. The Vietnamese historically have looked down upon the Cambodians as inferiors, and racial and cultural chauvinism has not dissipated with the advent of a Communist regime in Hanoi. But the Cambodian population is

also enraged that the Hanoi regime is allowing, and to some extent directly organizing, the migration to Cambodia of hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese civilians, who now hold many visible urban jobs—as merchants, café owners, technicians, and mechanics. Many Vietnamese girls have come to the cities to work as “taxi girls”—prostitutes—for the Vietnamese army and civilians.

Equally important, Vietnamese civilians have come as fishermen, to work on the Tonle Sap (or Great Lake), long the source of ample food for the Cambodian people. The older generation of Cambodians, remembering pre-war abundance, attribute food shortages in the country to pillaging by these Vietnamese settlers.

The Hanoi regime insists that the settlers are merely former residents of Cambodia, evicted by the anti-Vietnamese policies of the governments of Lon Nol (the U.S.-backed general who ruled Cambodia from 1970 to 1975) and Pol Pot, and that they are now returning to their homes and occupations.

But refugees from Phnom Penh, whom I have interviewed in the non-Communist resistance village of Rithisen, are adamant that many of the settlers have never lived in Cambodia before and that, unlike former residents, these new people do not understand the Khmer language.



THE JOINT VIETNAMESE-CAMBODIAN STREET PATROL IN PHNOM PENH

THE REGIME THAT VIETNAM HAS CREATED IS NOT only a colonial one; it is also a Communist regime. Most of the institutional features that Hanoi has imposed upon Vietnam itself have been transposed to Cambodia, now designated the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK). The Cambodian state is led by a small Communist Party of fewer than a thousand members. It rules the population through a Party-controlled government apparatus. Little is known about the backgrounds of the ruling elite, who maintain the same kind of personal secrecy that the Hanoi leadership does. One group of leaders is Hanoi-trained, and mostly married to Vietnamese women. A second and politically more significant group consists of former middle-level functionaries of the Khmer Rouge who defected to the Vietnamese in 1977 or 1978, after Pol Pot began to turn his revolutionary terror against members of his own party. According to the former *Washington Post* journalist Elizabeth Becker, who visited Cambodia under both the Khmer Rouge and Hanoi regimes, approximately a third of the Phnom Penh administration is made up of these former Pol Pot functionaries.

Popular resentment has been fueling the rise of the resistance. Three separate resistance movements are fighting the Vietnamese occupation. Today almost a quarter of a million Cambodians live under the authority of one or another of these anti-Vietnamese movements, mostly in western Cambodia, near the Thai border.

The Cambodian resistance is formally structured in a tripartite political entity called the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK), whose president is Cambodia's mercurial chief of state, Prince Norodom Sihanouk. The coalition government consists of the Khmer Rouge and two non-Communist groups. It has been recognized by ninety members of the United Nations (including the United States) as the sole legitimate representative of that country in the world body. But the coalition exists largely for purposes of international diplomacy. Each of the three groups operates quite autonomously in its political and military activities inside Cambodia.

The Vietnamese have responded to the resistance by using military force to try simultaneously to crush its armed guerrilla components and to terrorize the civilian population in resistance-controlled areas by attacking and destroying their villages. During the 1983 dry season Vietnamese forces, using tanks, rockets, and artillery, destroyed three Cambodian villages—Nong Chan, Sihanouk Borei, and Phnom Chat—uprooting a population of nearly 100,000 civilians. Similar operations were mounted by the Vietnamese in 1984, though with less success. I myself have interviewed victims of Vietnamese chemical attacks in guerrilla-controlled areas. At the same time, the Vietnamese have tried to destroy the political underground network of the resistance by police terror. Neither tactic has worked. And the use of political police repression, which accelerated in western Cambodia in May of 1983, after the limited success of the dry-season military offensive of January–April, resulted in a tide of civilian refugees fleeing from Vietnamese-controlled areas to the resistance-controlled areas near the Thai–Cambodian border.

THE MOST POWERFUL COMPONENT OF THE RESISTANCE is the Khmer Rouge. It has troops in the field numbering somewhere between 25,000 and 40,000. They operate throughout Cambodia, though their bases are located in the mountainous regions of the southwest and in the hills of the northeast, adjacent to parts of Laos and Vietnam. The Khmer Rouge is well supplied by China. In fact it has enough weapons to be able to pass some on to the Montagnard hill tribes of Vietnam, whose political organization is waging a guerrilla war against Hanoi in Vietnam's central highlands. But the Khmer Rouge has two problems in its struggle. The first is that Chinese weapons, though plentiful, are technologically inadequate to the task of destroying Vietnamese tanks and artillery in any great number.

The second problem the Khmer Rouge faces is its past political record. The Cambodian population fears a return

to the terror, social dislocation, and hard labor of the 1975–1978 period. Recognizing this, the Khmer Rouge has undertaken some political changes. Its propaganda now emphasizes nationalist, rather than revolutionary, themes—the survival of the Cambodian race and culture. Religion, formerly banned, is now tolerated though not encouraged in areas controlled by the Khmer Rouge. Folk dancing and singing—but not classical ballet, which was abolished in 1975—is now allowed. Premarital sex is no longer punished by execution. And private commerce, formerly abolished in the stampede for total communization, is now tolerated in the form of the black market. Pol Pot has given up any public titles as Khmer Rouge leader, other than commander of the armed forces, and he leaves diplomatic work to trusted aides. Most observers consider that these changes are temporary, but they have had some effect: the Khmer Rouge appears to have recuperated from losses of manpower suffered in military engagements with the Vietnamese, and it appears to be increasing in numerical strength. This increase cannot be explained by reference to coercion, since most of the civilian population can flee in advance of a Khmer Rouge attack, and since the Khmer Rouge does not seem to have acquired much new populated territory at the expense of the Vietnamese. The only likely explanation for the Khmer Rouge's strength is that young Cambodian boys are volunteering. Bizarre as it may seem to Westerners, given the bloody record of the Khmer Rouge in power, some segments of the Cambodian population want to fight on the side of the Khmer Rouge against the Vietnamese. Part of the reason is that the Khmer Rouge, unlike the non-Communist resistance, has a surplus of weapons. But one would also do well to remember the somewhat analogous experience of the Soviet Union during the Second World War. Only three years after Stalin's Great Terror had subsided, the Soviet dictator was able to enlist the voluntary support of millions of Soviet citizens in the Great Patriotic War against the Nazis. Stalin, like Pol Pot, had temporarily abandoned the more onerous forms of revolutionary repression, including the repression of religion, and had promoted nationalist values, in order to mobilize mass support for a life-or-death national struggle.

The second group within the resistance coalition is the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF), a broadly based nationalist movement led by Son Sann, a former prime minister under Prince Sihanouk. During the war of 1970–1975 Son Sann played no active role for either side. In 1971 he moved to France. He returned to the Thai border during the reign of the Khmer Rouge, and from there entered Cambodia in 1979 to form the KPNLF in October of that year. The KPNLF began as a fusion of several guerrilla groups, each of which had evolved from smaller units fighting against the Khmer Rouge in late 1975 and early 1976. All had escaped the Khmer Rouge, and their members had chosen to forfeit the prospects of safe lives in Thai refugee camps, with the possibility of settlement abroad, in favor of the mortal dangers of life as

jungle fighters. Thus the guerrilla leaders who are today Son Sann's field commanders are highly motivated fighters, dedicated to the nationalist, anti-Communist cause. They are joined in the administration of the KPNLF villages by the remnants of the Cambodian educated classes who survived the Khmer Rouge extermination campaigns of the 1975–1978 period. Given the Khmer Rouge's policy of systematically seeking out and eliminating the non-Communist intelligentsia, those who outwitted their executioners had to be people possessed of luck, intellectual cunning, and considerable personal courage.

But the social base of the KPNLF is the peasantry of western Cambodia. More than 140,000 people now live in KPNLF villages. These peasants, having fled both the Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese Communists, provide the volunteers for Son Sann's guerrilla army. That army now numbers 16,000 soldiers with weapons and several thousand more who are trained but have not received weapons. Son

Sann's military aid comes from China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). China could provide more but will not, probably out of a desire to remain on good terms with the Khmer Rouge. ASEAN would like to provide more but cannot, because of limited resources. The Western democracies, including the United States, are willing to provide only humanitarian aid. Thus the KPNLF is deficient not only in rifles, ammunition, field radios, and even uniforms for its men but also in the anti-tank weapons needed to protect the civilian population against Vietnam's Soviet-supplied tanks.

The third and smallest component of the resistance coalition is the organization of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, created in Pyongyang in 1979 and set up in western Cambodia in 1981. The Sihanoukist forces are believed to number about 9,000 men with guns and several thousand more who are trained but weaponless. Most of Sihanouk's weapons have been supplied by China, but approximately a thousand rifles have been provided by Singapore. North Korea provides Sihanouk with a special residence in Pyongyang. As with the KPNLF, the Western democracies are willing to provide only humanitarian aid to the Sihanoukist forces. But the French government, reluctant to have any contact with the Khmer Rouge, has recently joined the list of aid-givers. The Sihanoukist fighters are drawn from a largely peasant community of 35,000 people at Tatum, in northwest Cambodia.

The chief of staff of the Sihanouk army is former Gener-

al Tep Ben, who graduated from officer-training school in Phnom Penh one year ahead of the KPNLF's number-two general, Dien Del. There is a sense of camaraderie between the two senior generals. Why, then, are the Son Sann and Sihanouk forces separate?

The main reason has been Prince Sihanouk himself. Many of those who lead the KPNLF have not forgiven the Prince for his support of the Khmer Rouge between 1970 and 1975. And they question the Prince's firmness today, fearing that he might make a bad deal with the Vietnamese at some time in the future. Others in the KPNLF regard



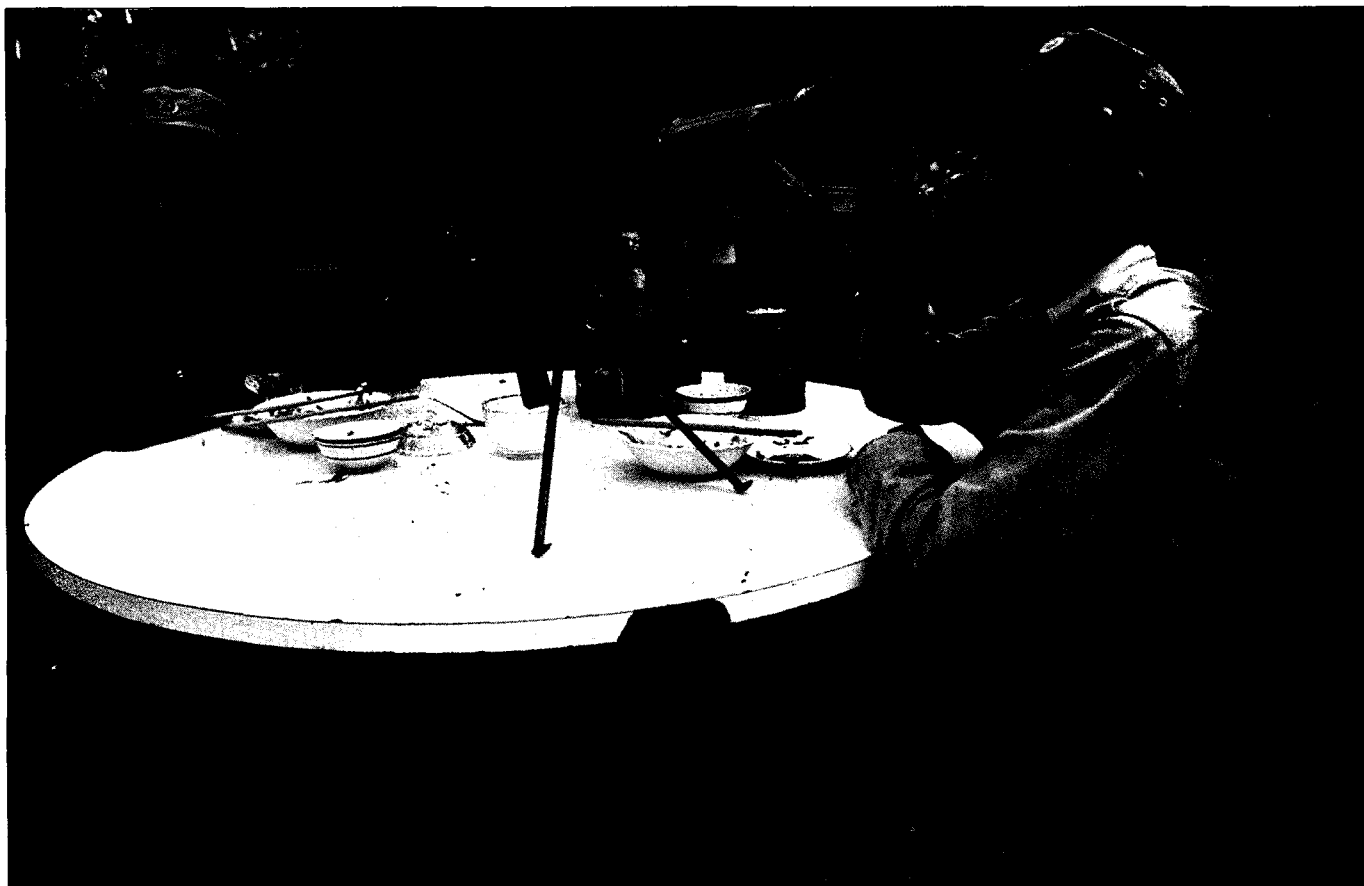
DEFECTORS FROM THE HENG SAMRIN ARMY AT A KPNLF VILLAGE

what binds the two non-Communist groups—their basic anti-totalitarian values—as more important than what divides them. Though aware of Sihanouk's dubious past, they believe that the Prince has learned his lesson, and that the present crisis, which threatens to destroy the Khmer national identity, demands the unity of the nationalist forces. The present trends suggest that those favoring unity are

in the ascendant. The KPNLF and the Sihanoukist organization now jointly operate a radio station that is broadcasting into Vietnamese-controlled areas. And the two non-Communist forces have agreed to mount joint military operations against the occupation forces.

That there is a need for unity in the non-Communist resistance happens to be the view of the ASEAN countries as well. The prime concern of the six Southeast Asian nations is the security and independence of their entire region. They believe that this objective requires restoring the independence of Cambodia, so as to prevent Soviet-backed Vietnam from endangering Thailand and the rest of Southeast Asia. Disunity among the resistance forces is counterproductive to the task of restoring Cambodian independence. So while ASEAN leaders are tolerant of the gulf that separates the non-Communist resistance from the Khmer Rouge, they are impatient with factionalism among the non-Communists.

Cambodian resistance to the Vietnamese occupation is operating in many parts of the country. Soviet agricultural advisers have been killed in Khmer Rouge raids. There is evidence on film (in my possession) that the Khmer Rouge has been operating on the Tonle Sap, in the center of the country. In early 1984 it launched a major attack on the cities of Siem Reap and Battambang, inflicting losses of men and equipment upon the Vietnamese. And Thai intelligence reports confirm the Khmer Rouge claim to have disrupted Vietnamese military supplies coming in from



JEAN-CLAUDE LABBE/GAMMA

VIETNAMESE SOLDIERS WITH THEIR ROCKET LAUNCHER, PHNOM PENH



JEAN-CLAUDE LABBE/GAMMA

SIHANOUKIST AND KHMER ROUGE PRISONERS AT BATTAMBANG JAIL

Laos. The Vietnamese themselves, by their arrests of civilians in rural areas of western Cambodia, confirm the KPNLF claim to have established some kind of underground network, which is a challenge to Vietnamese authority. Film shot by the KPNLF (a copy of which is also in my possession) confirms that they too are taking the battle to the Vietnamese, at least in the western part of the country. On April 15 last year the Vietnamese launched a major attack upon the KPNLF village and military headquarters at Ampil. After one month of heavy fighting the Vietnamese army had seized a nearby fire base but had failed to advance into the main village. The outcome was a morale-boosting victory for the KPNLF, and a setback for Hanoi, in their first major set-piece battle.

It is true that the resistance does not have the military means to drive the Vietnamese army out of Cambodia. But it is also true that the Vietnamese army cannot crush the Cambodian guerrillas unless it enters Thailand in a large-scale operation and thus risks another war with the United States. As with the previous wars in Indochina, the outcome will be decided by a combination of military and political factors. But this time the Vietnamese Communists face opponents who are as highly motivated and well organized as they are. Unlike the French and the Americans, the Cambodian resistance will not just give up. For now it is the Vietnamese, not the Cambodians, who are fighting in a foreign land.

TO UNDERSTAND WHY VIETNAM HAS IMMERSSED ITSELF in the Cambodian quagmire one must understand why it invaded in the first place. The invasion, which began on December 25, 1978, came just seven weeks after Vietnam had signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union, and six months after Vietnam had joined the Soviet-dominated economic group COMECON. These interrelated events shocked those who had subscribed to the view that the Vietnamese Communists were primarily fighters for national independence. Rather than re-evaluate their views, many in the West rushed to endorse the explanations provided by the Vietnamese Communist leaders. The explanations were that Vietnam had invaded Cambodia in order to save the Cambodian peasants from extinction at the hands of the "Pol Pot-Ieng Sary genocidal clique" and in order to eliminate the threat from China that was manifested in border attacks by its proxies, that same clique. These explanations are not merely self-serving; they are false.

The idea that Hanoi's leaders were concerned to save the Khmer people from Pol Pot is thoroughly ridiculous. Hanoi showed not the slightest concern for the fate of the Cambodian people while most of the killing was actually going on. On the contrary, Vietnamese Communist Party and government statements were lush in their praise of Pol Pot and his regime. In April of 1977, to cite just one example, on the occasion of the second anniversary of the "liberation of Phnom Penh," the Party newspaper published

the ecstatic account of a Vietnamese women's delegation that had recently returned from Cambodia. According to the account, "The Cambodian people were enthusiastically embarking on irrigation work . . . women are vigorously surging forward and joining men to become owners of the country."

On September 25, 1977, Pol Pot openly declared the existence of the Kampuchean Communist Party, which had previously functioned clandestinely. The Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party sent a message of congratulations, publicly expressing its joy.

Only after the Vietnamese Communists had realized that Pol Pot would not submit to their demands regarding their common border, over which they had been fighting since 1975, and that their differences on other matters were insoluble, did they start to raise the issue of the Khmer Rouge's domestic terror. But in spite of having added this new item to their propaganda agenda, the Hanoi leaders cynically installed in Phnom Penh a regime led by former Khmer Rouge functionaries.

The second explanation for the Vietnamese invasion—that it was in response to a security threat from China, via the Khmer Rouge—is also untenable. China terminated its military aid to Hanoi only after Hanoi's conquest of South Vietnam. Still, until mid-1978 China was Vietnam's second-biggest benefactor. China showed public signs of hostility toward Vietnam only after Vietnam began to persecute and drive out its ethnic Chinese minority in the first months of 1978. China cut off all its remaining economic aid only after Vietnam had joined COMECON. And China did not attack Vietnam militarily until February of 1979, after Vietnam had launched a full-scale invasion of Cambodia. The "Chinese threat" was an effect, not the cause, of the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia.

As for the question of a military threat from the Khmer Rouge, it may well be that the army of Democratic Kampuchea was engaged in large-scale provocation of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. But if so, this activity should not have necessitated a full-scale invasion of Cambodia. Certainly such provocation would not have required the policy of permanent domination that Vietnam now pursues in Cambodia, by means of the Heng Samrin regime it has set up. In accordance with that policy, the political consequences of the invasion are said to be "irreversible," and the Vietnamese will have nothing to do with even the nationalist forces of Prince Sihanouk and Son Sann. (During his recent visit to Australia, Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach told an interviewer that not only would Sihanouk and Son Sann not be allowed to participate in a future settlement but they would also have to be punished as "accomplices" of Pol Pot.)

There is only one explanation of Hanoi's invasion that is consistent with all aspects of past policy on Cambodia and that explains the regime's current intransigence and its willingness to bear such high economic and diplomatic costs. The Vietnamese Communists are inherently expansionist, and the concept of an Indochinese federation un-

der Vietnamese control has always been central to their imperial aspirations. A brief overview of their policies bears out this contention.

The Vietnamese Communist leaders staked a claim to the political future of Cambodia in the year their party was founded. In February of 1930, in Hong Kong, a talented emissary of the Communist International (Comintern), Ho Chi Minh, united three Marxist groups into a single Vietnamese Communist Party. Eight months later, after the Comintern had fully examined the documents of the new party, instructions were issued from Moscow that its name should be changed to the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP). The stated reason was that "the Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian proletariat have politically and economically to be closely related in spite of their differences in language, customs, and race." As it happened, there were no revolutionary movements in Cambodia or Laos at that time.

The ICP went underground in May of 1945 and in February of 1951 resurfaced under a new name—the Vietnam Workers' Party (Viet Nam Dang Lao Dong). Although the new name suggested that it had renounced its claim to authority over all the revolutionary movements of Indochina, the Party announced the creation of two "fraternal parties": a Lao Independence Party, staffed almost entirely by Vietnamese, and a Revolutionary Cambodian People's Party. According to the historian Bernard Fall, the new Cambodian party "was not only entirely created by the Lao Dong, but its very name and statutes had to be translated from Vietnamese into Cambodian." Ethnic Vietnamese were prominent in the leadership of the party.

The Vietnamese-created Cambodian Communist Party was never very successful in recruiting ethnic Khmer into its ranks. Nor was it able to achieve much military success against French colonialism. After independence was granted by the French to Prince Sihanouk, and was endorsed by the Geneva Conference of 1954, the Vietnamese Communists reluctantly agreed to withdraw all their forces from Cambodia. They took with them 2,300 Khmer—referred to by most non-Communists as the Khmer Vietminh. These Khmer Vietminh were given further training in Hanoi and kept in reserve until history should provide an opportune moment.

In the late 1950s another group of Cambodian Communists, with no connection to the Vietnamese, began to emerge in Phnom Penh. They were students who had studied in Paris and had discovered Marxism-Leninism there. On their return they developed contacts with the People's Republic of China, through the Chinese Embassy in Phnom Penh. During the 1950s and 1960s some made secret visits to China. There they came under the influence of Maoism. In 1960 these young Paris-educated Maoists, led by Pol Pot, took over the virtually defunct remnant of the Vietnamese-created party. That party, which they later renamed the Kampuchean Communist Party, guided what Sihanouk called the Khmer Rouge. In 1963 most of the Khmer Rouge leaders fled Phnom Penh

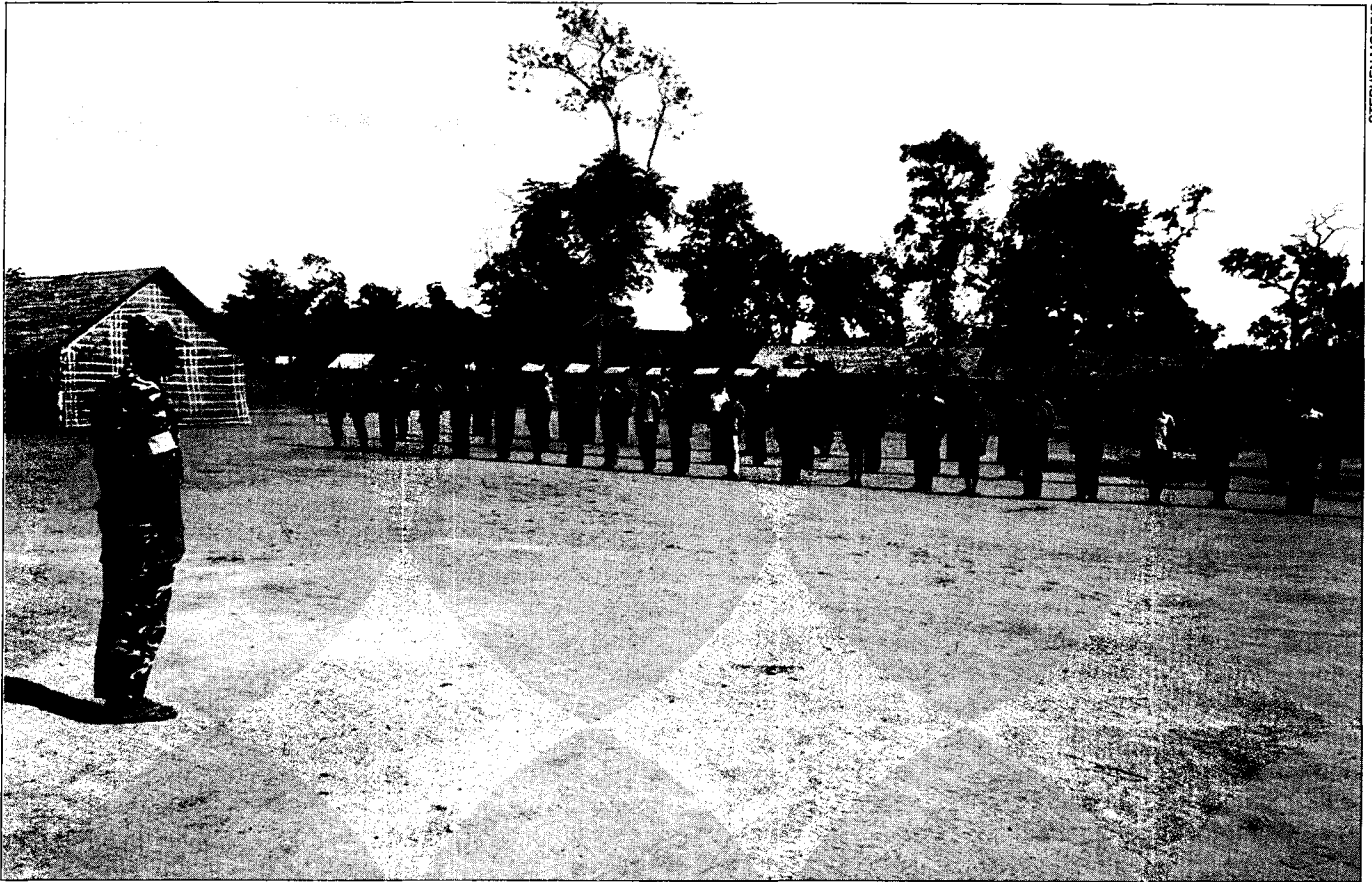
for the countryside, and in 1967 they began a guerrilla insurgency against Sihanouk's government.

In March of 1970 Sihanouk was overthrown by his prime minister and chief of staff, Lon Nol. The new government called on the North Vietnamese to remove their troops from Cambodian soil, which they had been occupying since 1965. Hanoi refused, and on April 2 launched the first of several major attacks against the Cambodian republic. This was the beginning of the conflagration in which the United States intervened, some four weeks later.

From April of 1970 until March of 1972 the North Vietnamese army seized large areas of the Cambodian countryside. In its wake it set up a political administration, nominally under the authority of Prince Sihanouk's Royal Government of Cambodia, although real power was in the hands of Communists. Many of these were Khmer Vietminh who had returned from Hanoi after the Lon Nol coup. But most were trained by, and all were under the authority of, the indigenous Communist apparatus of the Khmer Rouge. After the North Vietnamese army began to move out of Cambodia, in order to launch its 1972 Easter offensive against South Vietnam, Pol Pot began to purge his ranks of the pro-Hanoi Communists. Secret liquidations occurred periodically for the next six years. Thus, by the time relations between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and Democratic Kampuchea had reached their nadir, in early 1978, Pol Pot had pre-empted Vietnamese plans to seize control of Cambodia by means of a coup within the Kampuchean Communist Party.

The "party" that was installed in Phnom Penh by Vietnamese tanks, in January of 1979—the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party (KPRP)—claims to be that very same party that Ho Chi Minh created back in 1951. The Vietnamese and their Khmer protégés do not hide the connection but, rather, publicly celebrate it. The KPRP is the enfeebled vehicle of Hanoi's long-standing desire for an Indochinese federation under its control. The model it is trying ultimately to emulate is the Soviet Union, with Vietnam playing the same role toward Laos and Cambodia that the Russians play toward the non-Russians of the USSR. The nature of communism in Laos provides confirming evidence of this. There the regime is kept in power by the Vietnamese army, and its top leadership is intimately connected, often by ties of marriage, with the Vietnamese Communist Party.

WHAT UNDERLIES THE EXPANSIONIST AMBITIONS of the Vietnamese Communist Party? One simple answer is that the Vietnamese Communists may be trying to divert their people's attention from domestic economic woes by mobilizing the population for military conquest. But Communist elites can choose alternative means of dealing with domestic discontent. Making economic development a priority, as the current Chinese leaders have done, is one means. The Hanoi



KPNLF RECRUITS



SIHANOUKISTS TRAINING

leaders, who also had that option, nevertheless chose the less popular alternative. Why? Political choices often reflect non-rational impulses within a culture. In part the Vietnamese Communists are expressing the traditionally expansionist nature of Vietnamese nationalism. The geographic expansion of Vietnamese civilization has been achieved over several centuries, by military conquest and the cultural dissolution of neighbors. The Cham civilization, a Moslem culture that once existed in central Vietnam, was totally annihilated by the Vietnamese in the seventeenth century. What is now the Mekong Delta of South Vietnam was part of Cambodia until that region was conquered and annexed by the Vietnamese, in the eighteenth century. During the first half of the nineteenth century the Thais and the Vietnamese fought over the remains of the once great Khmer empire, until the French colonialists interceded. French colonialism was in fact a blessing in disguise for the Khmer, for while the Thais tolerated the Khmer cultural identity in return for suzerainty, the Vietnamese demanded not only political but also cultural submission.

There is a second cultural element underlying Vietnamese behavior today. The Hanoi leaders are not merely nationalists; they are Communist revolutionaries. Their revolutionary ideology is not window dressing; it shapes their domestic policy. That is why they have created a centrally planned economy, nationalized much of their limited industrial resources, inhibited private commerce, collectivized agriculture, suppressed religious and cultural freedom, and created a gulag of prisons and forced-labor camps for "reactionaries," "socially undesirable elements," and political officials and military officers of the former regime.

Just as Communist revolutionary values shape Hanoi's domestic policies, so they shape its foreign policies. Against this reality the received view of Vietnamese communism as primarily nationalist falls down completely. The Communist Party General Secretary Le Duan wrote in 1970 in *The Vietnamese Revolution*:

Our people are infinitely proud to stand in the forefront of the revolutionary battle fought by the world's peoples against imperialism, mankind's most dangerous enemy. . . . we have won greater support and assistance from the world revolutionary movement; our people have acquired the noble sentiments of proletarian internationalism, and have guarded themselves from bourgeois and petit-bourgeois nationalism.

This expression of an "internationalist" outlook contradicts the widely held belief that Communist Vietnam could have been another Yugoslavia, and Ho Chi Minh an Asian Tito. This myth, popularized by such reputable writers as Theodore Draper and Robert Shaplen, has mesmerized two generations of commentators on the struggle for Indochina. But it ignores the voluminous evidence of the Vietnamese Communist contempt for Tito's Yugoslavia. In 1948 the Vietnamese supported Stalin's expulsion of Tito from the Cominform and joined in the chorus denouncing Tito as an imperialist spy. And in May of 1963

Ho Chi Minh signed a joint declaration with China's Chairman Liu Shao Chi, which included the following statement:

The Yugoslav revisionist clique has betrayed Marxism-Leninism, has led Yugoslavia out of the socialist camp, and is engaged in sabotage against the socialist camp and the world communist movement and in activities detrimental to the unity of all peace-loving

forces and countries. Further exposure of the Yugoslav revisionist clique remains an essential task of the Marxist-Leninist parties of all countries.

The Vietnamese Communists have never regarded Yugoslavia as an authentic Marxist-Leninist state, partly because of its abandonment of totalitarian domestic policies, and partly because of its advocacy of genuine neutralism, of "standing outside all blocs."

The Vietnamese Communists regard the struggle against imperialism as the primary struggle for all true Communists. In pursuit of their goal the current Hanoi leadership, who received their early political and moral upbringing in the Stalinist USSR of the late 1920s and 1930s, and in the Stalinist Comintern, believe that the international Communist movement must display the same unity and discipline as an individual Communist party and must accept the authority of a coordinating center. Therefore, the Vietnamese regard a Communist state that wants to remain nonaligned as being treacherous to Marxist-Leninist principles. That is why they have always willingly accepted the authority of the Soviet Union as the leader of the "socialist camp" (except for the period 1963–1964, when Khrushchev treacherously embraced a détente with "U.S. imperialism" and Hanoi turned to Mao's China for leadership and support). That is also why they have always revered Stalin. According to a statement of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Workers' Party in December, 1963:



KHMER ROUGE SOLDIERS AND WOMEN'S TRANSPORT BRIGADE

DANIEL BURSTEIN/CONTACT

Concerning Stalin, our party has constantly upheld the stand that Stalin was an outstanding Marxist who had the great merit of disseminating and developing Marxism-Leninism, a great leader of the CPSU and the international communist movement.

Vietnamese Communist reverence for the Great Dictator, which continues unabated to this day, is a reflection of fundamental values. For the Vietnamese were, and still possess the attitudes of, Comintern apparatchiks of the Stalinist era.

A combination of two deeply rooted, seemingly contradictory, but in fact mutually reinforcing attitudes explains Vietnamese policy in Cambodia. One is traditional Vietnamese nationalism, which has always been militaristically expansionist and culturally intolerant. The other is revolutionary Communist internationalism, which cannot accept the factionalism of "bourgeois nationalism" within the anti-imperialist bloc, and which sees as its duty the integration of wayward, and militarily weaker, Communist states into the camp led by the Soviet Union.

The notion that other states may be motivated by ideology goes against the grain of American political thinking. But the assumption that states are motivated purely by economic interest and geopolitical considerations fails to explain the motivation of revolutionaries in power. We have only to consider the example of Khomeini's Iran—where ideology does not simply complement but overrides questions of realpolitik.

SHOULD THE UNITED STATES CARE ABOUT WHAT IS happening to Cambodia today? I believe it should, for two reasons: American national interests, and the most basic issues of international human rights. What the United States does or does not do will affect both.

American interests are involved because the struggle for Cambodia is important to the security of Southeast Asia, which is in turn central to the vital economic and strategic interests that the United States has in the entire East Asia and Pacific region.

What are the United States' economic interests in the region? U.S. trade with East Asia and the Pacific is greater than U.S. trade with any other region of the world. Japan is the second most important trading partner of the United States, after Canada. More than ten percent of U.S. foreign investment goes to the region, principally to Japan and Australia, though the proportion going to the Southeast Asian nations is growing. The growth of all the East Asian nations (China excepted) has been based upon a high volume of international trade. Japan in particular is totally dependent upon imports for its raw-material resources. Thus the security of the sea-lanes of East Asia, and in particular those of Southeast Asia (through which most of Japan's energy resources pass), is vital for the economic well-being of East Asia and the Pacific.

Here is where the economic and strategic interests of the United States intertwine. All of the countries of East

Asia and the Pacific, with the exception of Vietnam, North Korea, and Laos, are friendly to the United States. Six of them—Japan, South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand—have defense treaties with the United States. Australia provides communications bases that are vital to U.S. strategic forces, particularly the nuclear-submarine fleet. Thus the security of the international trade routes is essential to the economic survival of the East Asian and Pacific nations. And the economic viability and pro-Western political orientation of the East Asian and Pacific nations are important to both the United States' economy and its strategic position.

The greatest potential threat to these interests comes from Vietnam in concert with the Soviet Union. Since the fall of Saigon the Communist government of Vietnam has allowed the Soviet Union increasing access to naval and airport facilities, particularly those constructed by the United States at Cam Ranh Bay and Da Nang. The Soviet Union, whose trade in the Southeast Asian region is minuscule and whose economy is marginally oriented toward international trade, has no vital defensive interests in the region. The only conceivable purposes of the increasing Soviet military presence in Vietnam are offensive: to enhance the capacity of the Soviet Union, particularly its naval forces, to interdict the vital sea-lanes of the pro-Western countries of the region and the United States; to provide a convenient logistic supply depot for its highly militarized client state; and to sustain that country's ground offensives against pro-Western governments on the mainland of Southeast Asia.

The first motive is not open to serious discussion. The interdiction capacity has been realized. Also, in the event of future conflict (on the Korean peninsula or in the Philippines), Soviet logistic reach could be a real menace. Fifteen years ago the United States was the dominant force in the Pacific Basin; today it has a powerful rival.

The second motive hinges upon an interpretation of Vietnamese behavior, and it may be somewhat more difficult for Westerners to comprehend. Of course, as we have seen, there can be little doubt that Vietnam aims at colonizing Cambodia permanently. But why should anyone fear further expansion of Vietnamese power and influence beyond Cambodia? One way of demonstrating Vietnamese ambitions is by presenting what the Vietnamese leaders say. Le Duan, in *The Vietnamese Revolution*, wrote:

The fundamental interest of the proletariat, the people, and the nations of the world lies in *safeguarding world peace while promoting the revolution in various countries*. These two objectives are organically linked together; each is the premise of the other. Both are perfectly attainable once the Communists, thoroughly conscious of the strategically offensive position of the world revolution, are successful in setting up a united front bringing together all currents of the world revolution, all forces fighting for peace, national independence, democracy, and socialism, and are resolved to crush all imperialist aggression, repel every one of imperialism's belligerent

moves and schemes, drive it back step by step, destroy it piecemeal, and eventually overthrow it entirely.

But more important than what Hanoi leaders say is what they do. The Vietnamese Communists are training guerrillas to fight in several neighboring countries. Most significant is the training of Thai Communist guerrillas in Laos. The Thai insurgency began to unravel after its principal patron, China, cut off aid. Vietnamese attempts to revivify that insurgency, though not immediately dangerous, pose a long-term threat and indicate long-term intentions. And Vietnam's one-million-man army, armed with Soviet weapons, represents a menacing colossus that could be decisive in the absence of countervailing power.

Thus the activities of the Vietnamese army and the increase in and positioning of Soviet air and naval forces on Vietnamese territory pose a significant threat to American political and economic interests in the Far East.

But there is a second reason why Americans should be concerned about the outcome of the struggle for Cambodia, and that is the issue of human rights. The deprivation of human rights in Cambodia over the past decade has been one of the most profound in the modern world. This disaster did not, as some argue, happen because the United States brought the Vietnam War to Cambodia. The Vietnamese Communists did that—first by using Cambodia as a supply route and a sanctuary from which to wage war on South Vietnam, and thereby eventually attracting a “secret” American air response (which received Sihanouk's qualified acquiescence); second, and more important, by launching a full-scale military assault against the new Lon Nol government in early April of 1970, one month before American ground troops entered the country. Although many in the West believe that the March, 1970, palace coup that overthrew Sihanouk and brought Lon Nol to power was instigated by the CIA, no credible evidence supports this contention, as Stanley Karnow and others have pointed out.

The real basis of American obligation to Cambodia is that the United States abandoned that nation in 1975. The United States had intervened to support the Lon Nol government in 1970, but, exhausted by ten years of war in Indochina, Congress cut back military aid to the Cambodian government just as the Chinese were increasing their aid to the Khmer Rouge insurgents. The cut in U.S. aid made the Khmer Rouge's victory inevitable. And although by 1976 everyone knew that the victors had wrought a ter-

rible bloodbath inside Cambodia, the United States, like the rest of the world, sat back and did nothing.

Guilt should not be the sole basis for moral action. But a desire to provide some restitution to the victims of a failed policy certainly can be.

There are four policy options open to the United States. The first is to recognize Vietnamese hegemony over Cambodia as a *fait accompli*, and do whatever is necessary to ease the process of integration. The arguments usually presented in support of such a move are that the Cambodians prefer the Vietnamese to Pol Pot and that it would help wean the Vietnamese away from the Soviet Union and make them more amenable to Western influence.

This option is totally inconsistent with the United States' professed concern for human rights. Whether or not the Cambodians prefer the Vietnamese to Pol Pot could be determined by a general election, such as the United Nations has been demanding. But the Vietnamese and Pol

Pot are not the only choices available to Cambodia. The suggestion that they are reminds one of the argument made by Stalin's apologists that the Soviet army was the only alternative that East Europeans had to the Nazis.

As for the Soviet-Vietnamese connection, I have suggested that the Vietnamese *want* to be part of an alliance with the Soviet Union and prefer that superpower to this one for ideological as well as political reasons. But the argument in favor of sanctioning the status quo—that one accepts acts of aggression in order to win the aggressor over to one's side—is an argument for appeasement. And appeasement as a way of dealing with aggression does not have a very good track record. If the United States approved Vietnam's still uncompleted military conquest, the Vietnamese leaders would be justified in concluding that Thailand was on its own in the face of any future Vietnamese attack.

Furthermore, accepting Hanoi's aggression would produce disastrous consequences for the United States' current alliance system. Such a move would be a slap in the face to America's friends in the region, who have worked hard to build the huge United Nations majority against Vietnam's aggression. ASEAN nations, convinced of American unreliability, would either seek protection by closer alignment with China or (especially in Indonesia's case) accommodate themselves to Soviet and Vietnamese foreign policies. China, seeing its basic goal of strategic cooperation with America against Soviet-Vietnamese expansion



VIETNAMESE SOLDIERS AT ANGKOR WAT

JEAN-CLAUDE LABBE/GAMMA

nullified, would move further away from this country. U.S. influence in Asia would disappear overnight.

Finally, this argument rests on the assumption that U.S. capitulation to Vietnamese aggression would simply end the conflict in the region. But the government of China is not a pawn of the United States and is certainly not going to have its Indochina policy dictated by the United States. The war will continue at least as long as the Soviet Union and China see it as in their interests to support the Vietnamese colonialists and the Cambodian resistance respectively. All that American appeasement of Vietnam would achieve is America's loss of influence over the outcome.

The second option is to continue pursuing the current policy—giving economic and diplomatic support to the Son Sann and Sihanouk forces while making proper gestures of abhorrence toward their coalition partner. This policy lacks a concrete military element and is useless, because it does not redress the imbalance in the quality of weapons, which favors Vietnam. It leaves the Pol Pot forces dominant within the resistance coalition, and thereby reinforces Vietnamese propaganda that the main choice Cambodians face is between Vietnam and the Khmer Rouge. Finally, it is defective in that it leaves all effective anti-Vietnamese leadership in the region in China's hands. This is dangerous for two reasons. First, it enables Moscow and Hanoi to divide the ASEAN bloc, by playing upon Indonesia's and possibly Malaysia's fears of China. Second, it guarantees that the political outcome of the conflict will be decided by the Soviet Union and China. The United States, which has strategic interests at stake, has no influence via the Cambodian forces involved.

The third option is for the United States to give military assistance to all segments of the resistance. This policy would make sense from a purely Asian realpolitik perspective, because it would be likely to result in serious reverses for the Soviets and the Vietnamese. It would be pleasing to China, a strategic partner of the United States, because it would assist China's client, the Khmer Rouge, as well as impede China's enemies. But, most important, it would anger most of this country's European allies, and it would not be acceptable to the American Congress and the public, because it would be quite inconsistent with even the minimal standards of a human-rights policy.

This leads us to the final option, which is the only one that is simultaneously consistent with a concern for human rights and supportive of American economic and strategic interests. The United States should provide military assistance to the non-Communist resistance of Prince Sihanouk and Son Sann. These forces are the only ones that represent nontotalitarian Cambodian nationalism. And they are not clients of America's major adversary, the Soviet Union. That is why they have the enthusiastic backing of the ASEAN nations, the United States' major allies in the area.

Interestingly, despite their commitment to the Khmer Rouge, the Chinese have indicated privately that even they would like the United States to give military aid to the non-Communist forces. Yet the Reagan Administration, its tough rhetoric notwithstanding, remains paralyzed by the "Vietnam syndrome"—in Indochina, at any rate. It supplies only humanitarian and political assistance while continuing to rebuff ASEAN requests for military aid.

That the non-Communist forces not only have survived but also continue to grow, in the face of 180,000 heavily armed Vietnamese, while receiving limited external aid, testifies to their grass-roots support. If rifles, ammunition, field radios, and—most important—anti-tank weapons were provided, the non-Communists could expand their manpower and effectiveness dramatically. This would not in itself drive out the Vietnamese army. But by breaking that army's protective shield of Soviet-supplied armor, the non-Communists would inflict heavy losses. (The Vietnamese conscripts fighting in Cambodia, especially the southerners, absolutely lack motivation for this fight.) And the growth of the non-Communist forces would make them equal to, if not more powerful than, the Khmer Rouge. These two factors are crucial. Only if the Vietnamese are forced to pay heavily for their aggression are they going to contemplate a negotiated solution. And only if they have a powerful opponent other than the Khmer Rouge, which they regard as an implacable enemy, will they have an incentive to negotiate. A major increase in the strength of the non-Communists would be necessary to allay the fears of the Vietnamese, and of many Cambodians, that a Vietnamese withdrawal would lead to a takeover by the Khmer Rouge.

Those who today denounce the Khmer Rouge holocaust should explain what they have in mind to prevent such a thing from happening again. Helping Son Sann and Sihanouk will not bring back the two million Cambodians who died in "peace" and under "socialism." But it will give the living a better chance to avoid a similar fate.

United States help to the non-Communists probably would not be countered by an escalation on the other side. The Vietnamese army, occupying Laos as well as Cambodia, and pinned down by China to the north, cannot escalate much further. The Soviet Union, burdened by its aid to the desperate Polish, Cuban, and Vietnamese economies, and still unable to deal with its own Afghanistan quagmire, is in no position for large-scale intervention in Cambodia.

Aiding the non-Communists in Cambodia would not be the prelude to "another Vietnam" for the United States, because no American troops, and perhaps no Americans at all, need be directly involved. (ASEAN would gladly act as a conduit.) It would instead lay the groundwork for "Vietnam's Vietnam." □



ODE TO ROT

BY JOHN UPDIKE

Der gut Herr Gott

said, "Let there be rot,"
and hence bacteria and fungi sprang
into existence to dissolve the knot
of carbohydrates photosynthesis
achieves in plants, in living plants.

Forget the parasitic smuts,
the rusts, the scabs, the blights, the wilts, the spots,
the mildews and aspergillosis—
the fungi gone amok,
attacking living tissue,
another instance, did Nature need another,
of predatory heartlessness.

Pure rot
is not

but benign; without it, how
would the forest digest its fallen timber,
the woodchuck corpse
vanish to leave behind a poem?
Dead matter else would hold the elements in thrall—
nitrogen, phosphorus, gallium
forever locked into the slot
where once they chemically triggered
the lion's eye, the lily's relaxing leaf.

All sparks dispersed
to that bad memory where the dream of life
fails of recall, let rot

proclaim its revolution:
the microscopic hyphae sink
the fangs of enzyme into the rosy peach
and turn its blush a yielding brown,
a mud of melting glucose:
once-staunch committees of chemicals now vote
to join the invading union,
the former monarch and constitution routed
by the riot of rhizoids,
the thalloid consensus.

The world, reshuffled, rolls to renewed fullness;
the oranges forgot
in the refrigerator "produce" drawer
turn green and oblate
and altogether other than edible,
yet loom as planets of bliss to the ants at the dump.
The banana peel tossed from the Volvo
blackens and rises as roadside chicory.
Bodies loathsome with their maggotty of ghosts resolve
to earth and air,
their fire spent, and water present
as a minister must be, to pronounce the words.
All process is reprocessing;
give thanks for gradual ceaseless rot
gnawing gross Creation fine while we sleep,
the lightning-forged organic conspiracy's
merciful counterplot.

HOW TO TALK TO TEENAGERS ABOUT DRINKING AND DRIVING.

KEEPING OUT OF HARM'S WAY.

Teenagers can get into a lot of trouble with alcohol. Even teenagers who don't drink. Often they aren't aware of the facts.

A new view of the statistics shows where part of the problem lies, and can lead to a better communication between adults and teenagers.

Teenagers are in the high-risk group. People between the ages of 16 and 24 represent only 20 percent of the licensed drivers of our country. But that same group is involved in 42 percent of all the alcohol-related fatal crashes. When you think about that, two tragic things are revealed:

First, not all teenagers killed in such accidents are themselves drunk at the time. Often they have had nothing to drink at all, but are passengers in cars driven by teenagers who have been drinking.

Second, teenagers are often on the roads late at night, especially on weekends, when most crashes involving alcohol occur. They are targets for cars driven by people who have had too much to drink.

Some facts about alcohol you might want to discuss with teenagers are often surprising to adults:

- One can of beer, as well as one eight-ounce glass of wine, and one 1½-ounce drink of 86-proof liquor are all equally intoxicating. The risk is the same regardless of what you've been drinking.

- The legal definition of intoxication is based on "Blood Alcohol Concentration" or "BAC." If you have a BAC of .10, you are legally drunk in most states. But for drivers or drinkers who are less experienced, a BAC of .05, or sometimes lower, can be dangerous.

- Even relatively low levels of alcohol can reduce your tolerance to injury, increasing the danger in an accident.

Arm your teenagers with the facts and give them time to reflect on them.

If expected to show good judgment, teenagers are more likely to live up to it.

Please discuss the problem of drinking and driving with your teenagers now, and if you think this advertisement will help, ask them to read it.

And keep in mind, that the best way to teach young people—as they may tell you—is by example.

The people of General Motors care, and urge teenagers, and their parents, to give serious thought to the dangers of drinking and driving. It's something we all can do.

This advertisement is part of our continuing effort to give customers useful information about their cars and trucks and the company that builds them.



Chevrolet • Pontiac
Oldsmobile • Buick
Cadillac • GMC Truck

MUSIC

LONG LIVE BIG BANDS

BY GARY GIDDINS

THE ERA WHEN charismatic jazz orchestras crisscrossed the land, fueled by maverick soloists and audacious arrangements, is fast receding into a myth as nostalgic and unreliable as that of the Wild West. Young listeners often associate big bands with a period music suitable for accompanying tuxedoed vocalists and ringing in the New Year. The sheer power of a dozen brassy and reeds riffing in conjunction with a swinging rhythm section is hard to appreciate in an age of electronic overkill; a big band (for example, Maynard Ferguson's) that achieves financial success today is likely to gloss over the nuances of orchestral writing with electronic lacquer. Recently a friend asked me to program a swing tape for her thirtieth birthday party. Much to my chagrin, people jammed the dance floor when her paid disc jockey cued the thumping bass of disco but drifted over to the bar when he grudgingly played Count Basie's "Jumpin' at the Woodside" or Benny Goodman's "Let's Dance." I was reminded of that prophetic moment in 1956 when Alan Freed fired Basie from the radio show *Camel Rock and Roll Dance Party* because kids couldn't dance to him.

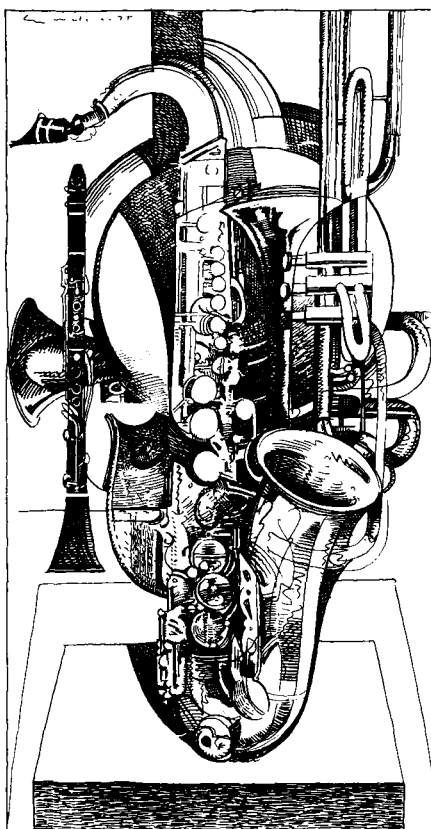
Dance styles and rhythms change, of course. Lamentations, which can never re-create the musical excitement of a bygone era, may lead to the petrified images and sounds of ghost bands, and these deserve all the abuse they get. Something more than passing fashions is at stake, however. The very notion of a jazz orchestra, a unique and peculiarly American institution that balances composition and improvisation more evenly than is possible in a chamber-sized jazz group, has been foundering since the demise of the Swing Era. Last winter Woody Herman, who, at seventy-one, is the youngest of the Swing Era pioneers and the last still committed to the road, taped a TV ad for dentures to help finance his orchestra for another year. Be-

tween sets one night at New York's Rainbow Room he told me, "Duke was right—having a big band is an avocation. It's no business."

IN THE FIFTY-TWO-PAGE booklet that accompanies *Big Band Jazz: From the Beginnings to the Fifties*, a six-record anthology produced for the Smithsonian Collection of Recordings, the editors and annotators Gunther Schuller and Martin Williams write:

Perhaps future generations will perform and listen to the best swing band instrumentals rather the way we now listen to the best European baroque music and the best American ragtime: that is, as dance-oriented music rather than music to dance to. Perhaps the instrumental classics of the swing idiom will be played and listened to in the same way that we now attend Rameau, Vivaldi, and Joplin.

Actually, there have always been a few



such performers and listeners. The pioneers of big-band music set their sights on concert halls at least as far back as 1924, when Paul Whiteman commissioned Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. But most people fail to distinguish between music composed for a big band and dance-band music, and this failure helps keep modern jazz orchestras on the ropes.

The Smithsonian anthology is a flawed but solid attempt—easily the most ambitious to date—to place big bands in a broader perspective. (It is available on records or cassettes from Smithsonian Recordings, P.O. Box 10230, Des Moines, Iowa 50336, for \$41.96 plus \$3.50 postage.) Schuller and Williams are out to bedazzle the listener without disparaging the impulse to dance or indulging in panegyrics to lost youth. In documenting the diversity of big-band music over a period of thirty years they make a case for the integrity of the large ensemble that should enlighten even those who regard orchestral jazz as nothing more than an improbable luxury of the Depression. Since the selections were made with several audiences in mind—from ballroom veterans to serious listeners to novitiates—the eighty selections by thirty-one bands include major hits, historical touchstones, and obscure gems. Fletcher Henderson, Earl Hines, Chick Webb, Jimmie Lunceford, Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, and Woody Herman are generously represented, as expected. Paul Whiteman and Glenn Miller, peripheral figures in jazz but not in the history of big bands, are persuasively included, as are such unrenowned experimenters as John Nesbitt and Boyd Raeburn, and a handful of "territory" bands that never achieved national recognition. Enthusiasts will take exception to certain choices but not to the quality of the music, which is generally high.

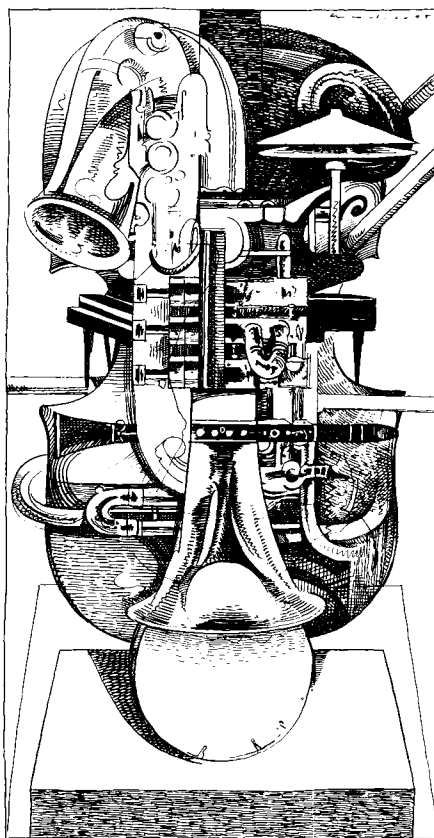
In order to keep the project manageable, the anthologists imposed severe restrictions on themselves, some of them questionable. For example, they eschewed "vehicles for star instrumentalists," thereby excluding an important style of big-band writing—the concerto, of which Duke Ellington was the foremost creator and the trumpeters Louis Armstrong and Roy Eldridge were among the most glorious performers. A more eccentric decision was to confine the selections by Ellington to the years 1938–1946, so that his impact on the

Gary Giddins is the author of Rhythm-annings, a collection of articles about jazz, to be published in March.

evolution of the genre in the 1920s is ignored, along with his more ambitious achievements of later years. Most distressing of all is the "arbitrary cutoff date" of 1950.

OVER THIRTY YEARS big-band music evolved from rag-influenced orchestrations with multiple themes, two- and four-measure breaks, and simple call-and-response antiphony to a virtuoso concert music of broad colors, outlandishly complicated melodic phrases, and exotic rhythms. Although it is logical to compare the role of big bands in jazz to that of symphony orchestras in European music, the analogy is limited, because symphony conductors and musicians are merely interpreters of a written score. A better analogy might be found in film, specifically in the responsibilities of the director (the band-leader), the scenarist (the arranger), and the actors (the soloists). Most big-band classics are products of collaborative tension, even though the final effect—as in a movie—is determined by a dominant personality. Records by Duke Ellington and Count Basie reflect chiefly the personalities of the leaders, those by Jimmie Lunceford and Claude Thornhill the arrangers, and those by Louis Armstrong and Gene Krupa the soloists. Basie once observed that it was dangerous to let a band rely on its soloists, because when you lost your stars you were out of business; he switched from a scrappy band filled with stylish soloists ("One O'Clock Jump") in the 1930s to a precision-oriented arranger's band ("Shiny Stockings") in the 1950s. Yet as different as those orchestras were, the foundation for each was Basie's piano, his rhythmic style, and his insistence on simplicity and economy. Benny Goodman, in contrast, based his band on arrangements that had been conceived for the orchestras of the pioneering Fletcher Henderson (who ended up on Goodman's payroll when his own band folded) and Chick Webb. Tommy Dorsey made Jimmie Lunceford's sound his own by hiring Lunceford's arranger Sy Oliver.

Despite the absence of "star vehicles," the Smithsonian collection luxuriates in the give-and-take of ferociously talented individualists committed to a music dependent on teamwork. Perhaps the most striking of the many surprises are two arrangements for McKinney's Cotton Pickers by John Nesbitt. Nesbitt, a trumpeter and arranger, has been



completely neglected since his early death, in 1935, because he was overshadowed by his associate Don Redman, a gifted composer ("Cherry," "Gee Baby, Ain't I Good to You") and instrumentalist. Redman, as Fletcher Henderson's arranger and aide de camp, and as the brains behind the Cotton Pickers and the Chocolate Dandies, is recognized as a premier architect of big-band jazz. "Put It There" and especially "Stop Kidding," a roller-coaster excursion into multiple rhythms and mutable forms that would have scared dancers to death, prove that Nesbitt was a formidable innovator, too.

Other unexpected highlights include Jesse Stone and his Blue Serenaders' 1927 "Starvation Blues," with its wonderfully undulating last chorus; Glenn Miller's self-consciously experimental 1937 arrangement of "I Got Rhythm," with sudden silences and fancy counterpoint; and a rare alternate take of Henderson's 1924 "Copenhagen" that finds second-raters Charlie Green and Buster Bailey improvising their pants off and Louis Armstrong, whose blues chorus made the master take an instant classic, playing exactly the same solo as on the master take.

The more familiar performances kindle new insights—not least because the Smithsonian employed the engineer

Jack Towers to remaster the original recordings scrupulously, adjusting pitch where necessary and beefing up the sound. (A miraculous job of cosmetic splicing has removed the sax squeak from Chick Webb's "Stomping at the Savoy.") On the first two discs alone are Henderson's "Down South Camp Meeting," building via an ingenious interlude to a heady climax; Bennie Moten's "Toby," based on "Sweet Sue," with Basie striding à la Fats Waller, Ben Webster tearing through the chord changes, and on the final chorus the whole band splitting into sizzling sectional counterpoint; Earl Hines's "Madhouse," an exuberant Jimmy Mundy arrangement in which Quinn Wilson shows how valid the tuba can be in a rhythm section, and Hines's "Grand Terrace Shuffle," in which the arranger Budd Johnson sets up his own steamy saxophone solo with keening orchestral riffs; four Chick Webb numbers with clever details (the rise-and-shine beginning of Pete Clark's alto solo in "That Naughty Waltz"), flashy virtuosity (Chauncey Houghton's whirling clarinet in "Harlem Congo"), and Webb's impetuous rhythms (everywhere); Sy Oliver's alchemical juxtapositions of instruments in unusual combinations on Jimmie Lunceford's "Organ Grinder Swing"; and Benny Goodman's "Sometimes I'm Happy," with a chorus of saxophone variations written by Fletcher Henderson (among other things, Goodman's was a fine repertory orchestra). Masterpieces by Basie, Ellington, Shaw, Herman, Gillespie, and Thornhill follow.

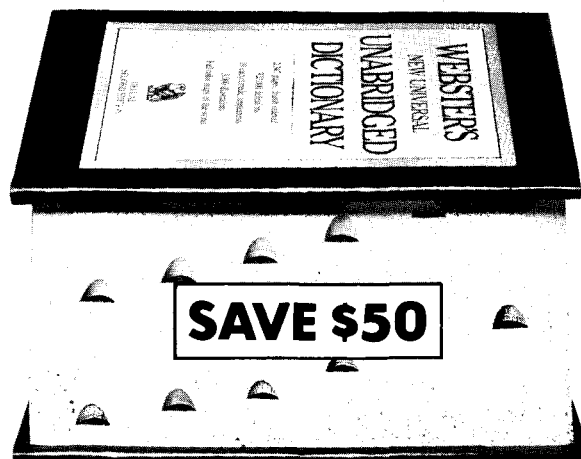
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE NOT to take issue with some inclusions and omissions. The only musically unsatisfying selection is Lunceford's simpering "Mood Indigo," which seems especially jarring because Ellington's sublime version is missing. Andy Kirk's "Big Jim Blues" is a savvy choice for demonstrating his band's adventurous approach to song form, but the arranger Mary Lou Williams would have been better served by other performances by Kirk. Then there is the puzzling absence of such leaders as Red Norvo, Harlan Leonard, Gene Krupa (who is unfairly castigated in the notes), and Lucky Millinder, and such arrangers as Eddie Sauter, Deane Kincaide, George Handy, and Shorty Rogers. The arranger Billy Strayhorn is represented by "Take the A Train" but not by any song with the dreamy impressionism that was his trademark. Because of the

ban on star vehicles, Louis Armstrong appears in an undistinguished Joe Garland jump riff ("Leap Frog") instead of in the superb arrangements written to show off his genius. The Latin influence on Dizzy Gillespie's band is entirely ignored. Yet there are two pieces each by Charlie Barnet and Harry James (one each would be enough), four by Tommy Dorsey, and five arrangements by Sy Oliver.

These are quibbles. The larger problem is that arbitrary cutoff date, which I suspect will simply reinforce the prejudice that this collection should be putting to rest once and for all: the idea that big-band music is a phenomenon of the Swing Era.

Big Band Jazz has two equally ambitious precedents—*The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz*, which proffers the word "classic" to justify its cutoff date (which in fact is rather late: 1966), and *The Smithsonian Collection of Country Music*, which goes right up to 1975, proving to country dilettantes like me that Nashville did not lose its soul with the deaths of Hank Williams and Lefty Frizzell. The big-band set should have followed a plan like the one for the country-music set; through either tougher editing or the addition of another disc, some recognition of the orchestral styles of the past thirty years should have been included, to prove the enduring value of the big-band tradition. Although two exceptions to the 1950 cutoff date have been allowed—Bill Holman and Frank Foster are each represented with an appropriate mid-fifties arrangement—no mention is made of such orchestrators as Anthony Braxton, George Russell, Johnny Richards, Ernie Wilkins, Neal Hefti, Charles Mingus, Al Cohn, Manny Albam, Chico O'Farrill, Quincy Jones, Bill Potts, Oliver Nelson, Thad Jones, Bob Brookmeyer, Sam Rivers, Muhal Richard Abrams, Toshiko Akiyoshi, Carla Bley, Sun Ra, J. J. Johnson, Bob Moses, David Murray, or Gil Evans in his later work. As the closest thing we have to a ministry of culture, the Smithsonian needs to be especially wary of giving the impression that a collection of this kind is a museum piece, an artifact from our past ready to be filed away. Introductory comments under the heading "What Did the Music Mean?" give precisely that impression. This survey would have done greater service to big-band music had it shown how the idiom has survived despite the loss of popular support and a lack of subsidization.

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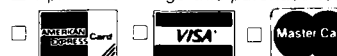
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An orchestra that plays concert jazz has only a slightly better chance than a symphony of surviving in the marketplace. But symphonies are subsidized by the public and private sectors, while big bands are still expected, thirty-five years after the collapse of the Swing Era, to compete as pop. Imagine the classical European idiom reduced in our time to the scale of chamber groups, and you get an idea of what's really at stake. With the loss of Count Basie the number of full-time jazz orchestras that buy arrangements and apprentice jazz soloists has been diminished dramatically. Indeed, big-band music has in large measure been shunted to university campuses and student orchestras. Yet the desire and the tenacity to work in this form are constant, and new orchestras are always starting up. This past year we've heard the call to arms from bandleaders of every generation, from Artie Shaw, who is fronting a band for the first time since his retirement in 1954, to Illinois Jacquet, who has traded in his quartet for a swing orchestra, to David Murray, who has assembled some of New York's brightest young modernists for a big band that appears all too infrequently in local clubs.

Most big bands have short life-spans, but some persist. Gil Evans is working more than ever, George Russell is on

tour, Mel Lewis and the Jazz Orchestra have celebrated nineteen years of Monday nights at the Village Vanguard, and various European ensembles, including the Vienna Art Orchestra, Willem Breuker, and the Globe Unity Orchestra, are showing Americans how the newest techniques in their music can be elaborated in larger settings.

The idea of a stable big-band music that keeps its eye on the future while celebrating its past is long overdue. Jazz orchestras can and should be maintained in the same houses and by the same boards of directors that conserve philharmonic orchestras. Under those circumstances they could offer the proven repertoire and commission new works—which need not be written exclusively by jazz composers. Stravinsky wrote the *Ebony Concerto* for Woody Herman, because he was intrigued by jazz instrumentation (as opposed to jazz style). For economic reasons jazz orchestras are more likely than symphonies to take artistic chances on the new and untried. But boards will be boards, and before that can happen the status of orchestral jazz will have to change significantly. The Smithsonian collection shows how rich the classic repertoire is; a more comprehensive approach would have made a still stronger case for the enduring glories of big-band music. □

CLASSICS IN CONTEXT

BY WILLIAM H. YOUNGREN

ONE OF THE most difficult questions facing anyone who tries to write about (or just think about) the history of music is how closely the music of a given period may justifiably be said to reflect or embody the predominant ideas of that period. For music, unlike literature or representational visual art, is highly abstract. Often its history can seem almost completely autonomous, closed off, merely the solving of formal problems that then beget new problems and new solutions. This is especially true of the classical period, since composers then were not men of letters, in touch with and even influencing the current of

ideas, as Berlioz, Schumann, Wagner, and Schoenberg were later to do. Haydn, Mozart, even Beethoven (not to mention the minor composers of the time) were, rather, more like court servants or paid entertainers. Also, the period's central achievement, the classical style, as first embodied in the mature sonata form of Haydn and Mozart, seems, if one thinks about it, to be one of the great inexplicable miracles in the history of the arts.

When idea-oriented historians of the classical period have gone astray, it has usually been because they have too easily assumed that the eighteenth century is best summarized by those familiar tags "The Age of Reason" and (to quote the title of the relevant volume of the *New Oxford History of Music*) "The Age of

Enlightenment." The very phrase "sonata form" suggests a recipe or blueprint for making music to order, and hence accords perfectly with the textbook notion of the eighteenth century as an age that wanted everything rational, tidy, and neat. Thus Haydn has traditionally been presented as "Papa" Haydn, a bewigged and beloved (yet still faintly patronizable) practitioner of strict sonata form; Beethoven as the unruly (yet wholly admirable) iconoclast, the first musical voice of the Romantic spirit exemplified by the French Revolution; and Mozart as an undeniable genius who falls, disconcertingly, somewhere in between: the friend and admirer of Haydn, yet also (at least in *Figaro*) a sort of closet revolutionary.

Though these crude stereotypes may still occasionally be encountered, they were effectively demolished long ago by D. F. Tovey, most notably in his *Essays in Musical Analysis* (1935–1944). Tovey talked little about external ideas, concentrating instead on the concrete details of form and articulation evidenced by the many musical examples that peppered his text. The two best recent books, Charles Rosen's *The Classical Style* (1971) and *Sonata Forms* (1980), have, as their titles suggest, followed Tovey's lead in treating the music of the classical period almost entirely from the inside, as a self-contained, evolving body of musical practice. But of course ideas are (or at least may be) important. In his new book, *The Age of Mozart and Beethoven* (Cambridge University Press, \$34.50/\$14.95), Giorgio Pestelli has managed to bring ideas back into our picture of the classical period without falling into distortion or oversimplification—and without citing a single bar of music-type in his 259 pages of text.

Pestelli is in agreement with the best literary scholarship of the past fifty years in seeing the eighteenth century more as The Age of Sentiment than as The Age of Reason. His many literary references, though necessarily brief, always make an illuminating musical point. Thus, for example, he not only cites Richardson's novel *Pamela* (1741), as we should expect him to do; he also goes on to point out that the novel provided the poet Goldoni with the libretto for "the first comic opera of international importance," Piccini's *La buona figliola* (1760). And of Piccini, Pestelli adds: "Nobody was more suited than he, the man who had christened his daughters Giulia and Chiarella after the leading character

William H. Youngren teaches English at Boston College. He writes on music regularly for The Atlantic.

and the cousin in [Rousseau's] *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, to receive the stream of sensibility that was softening the heart of Europe."

THE FIRST TWO sections of the book deal, respectively, with the instrumental and the vocal music of the problematic "transitional" years 1750 to 1775, from the death of Bach to the emergence of Haydn and Mozart as major figures. Most previous writers have skirted these years, but Pestelli dwells on them, devoting a great deal of attention to the *galant* instrumental style and to *opera buffa*, its vocal and theatrical counterpart. His stress lies on the widespread demands for simplicity and naturalness in music, for "social communication" and "conversational" directness, which began to be voiced by theorists and acted upon by composers as early as the 1730s, in reaction against the seeming artificiality and scholastic difficulty of much Baroque music, especially that of Bach. "Counterpoint was the thing to be avoided. . . . Themes became shorter and more immediately appreciable. . . . Phrases were constructed with greater concern for symmetry. . . . Rhythm tended towards absolute strophic regularity."

But Pestelli is well aware that these phrases do not adequately describe even the music of the two most interesting composers of these transitional years, Gluck and C. P. E. Bach, let alone the great works of Haydn and Mozart that lie just ahead. Sonata form, as we find it in such early symphonists as Sammartini and Johann Stamitz, was "the result of a tendency towards simplification and rationalization, according to the taste of the *galant* style," but "in the forty years 1770–1810, in the hands of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, sonata form was taken as a frame of reference for completely different profound and unpredictable ideas." As the music becomes greater, Pestelli increasingly stresses its autonomy, its independence from contemporary theoretical pronouncements:

Thus, while theorists and scholars went to fantastic lengths to uphold analogies between music and language, the real self-contained language of music—the very notion of a "musical language," in fact—was born in the instrumental field of sonatas and quartets. This process, which had no theoretical manifestations . . . was exclusively the result of "abstract" musical thought—that is, it

was not externally influenced by literary culture as was opera.

The treatment of the three great classical composers that mainly constitutes the last two sections of the book is just as fine as what has preceded. Stressing Mozart's "power as an assimilator," his "ability to grasp what was essential in every genre almost without the knowledge of any model," Pestelli brilliantly sums up the composer's complex relations to a multitude of contemporary styles while still doing full justice to his originality. Beethoven is firmly set apart from the Romantics who followed him. "In the face of the official romantics, he ended up proving a nuisance," his later work showing "little interest in the romantic school." "Going beyond sonata

sical style. The "richness and novelty" of Mozart's later operas were produced "without any plans or manifestos and without the help of publicity in an age full of intellectualism and theoretical statements." Mozart was a man "who never consciously thought of reforming anything," and the success of *Figaro* had nothing whatever to do with the French Revolution, "which nobody was thinking about in Vienna in 1786." As a matter of fact, *Figaro* was greeted in Paris in 1793 by an "almost total lack of interest," and the French Revolution itself, like its later Russian counterpart, turns out to have had a mostly conservative influence on music, producing beat-the-drum theatricals and a good deal of band music. "It is generally recognized," Pes-



form did not mean collapse, a rhapsodic style or a pot-pourri, but greater formal mastery."

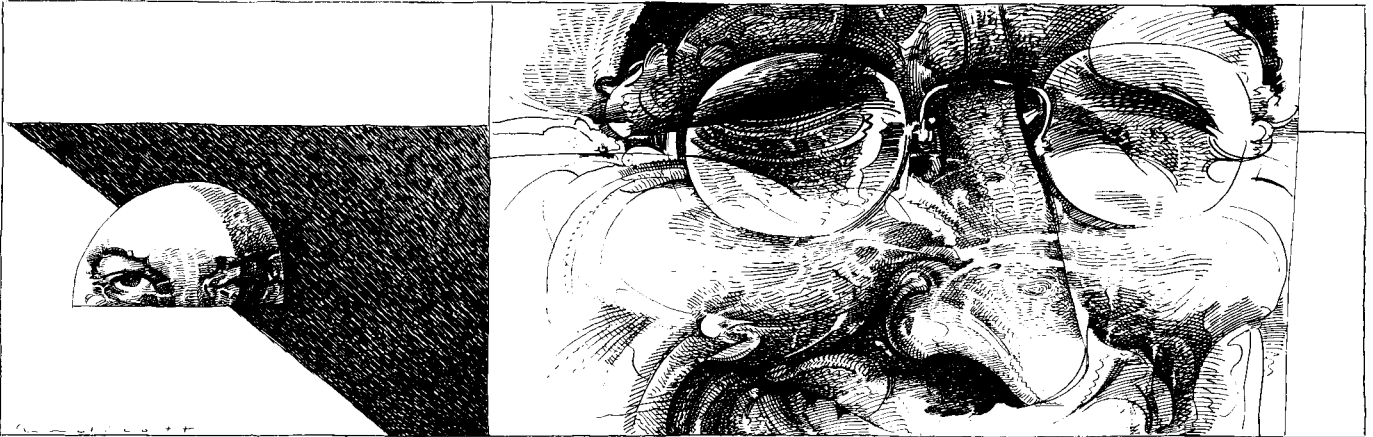
To Haydn, whose name ought by rights to have been included in the title of this book, Pestelli is slightly less sympathetic. He underestimates Haydn's influence on Beethoven, finds the great late masses to be "works of tedious dignity with a senatorial tone," and dismisses Haydn's operas with the curious remark that he "did not have the taste for mystification that denotes the theatrical genius."

Through all this, Pestelli also manages to deal fairly and illuminatingly with a number of minor composers and to sustain his emphasis on the growing autonomy of the musical language which made possible the perfection of the clas-

telli suavely concludes, "that the French Revolution was foreign to the romantic movement."

The Age of Mozart and Beethoven provides us with a useful model of the special sort of critical tact most necessary to the music historian, the tact that tells him when ideas are relevant to the music and when they are not. This tact, even more than the estimable erudition that Pestelli shows throughout, especially when dealing with opera, is what makes his work so admirable, a most welcome counterbalance to the "intrinsic" approach of writers like Tovey and Rosen. I should add that the English translation, by Eric Cross, is clean and idiomatic, and that a useful group of readings from contemporary sources is appended to the text. □

BOOKS



THE CHANGING IMAGE OF THE NEW DEAL

BY DAVID M. KENNEDY

THE GREAT DEPRESSION
by Robert S. McElvaine.
Times Books, \$19.95.

"NO HONEST HISTORIAN can take part with—or against—the forces he has to study," Henry Adams once wrote. "To him even the extinction of the human race should be merely a fact to be grouped with other vital statistics."

That is a rather severe standard of scholarly detachment. Fortunately, no scholar has yet been put to the ultimate test that Adams conjured up. But most historians have fallen notoriously short of dispassionate objectivity, even in the face of less conclusive events. They have been conspicuously partisan in their treatment of the Depression decade of the 1930s. To be sure, the sheer enormity of that stricken era could cloud even the loftiest Olympian vision. Many of those who lived through it, in fact, regarded it as a kind of American apocalypse, heralded by the stock-market crash of 1929, which Edmund Wilson once described as "a rending of the earth

*David M. Kennedy teaches history at Stanford University. His most recent book is *Over Here: The First World War and American Society*. He is currently working on a volume covering the years 1933 to 1945 in *The Oxford History of the United States*.*

in preparation for the Day of Judgment."

At the cruelest depth of the Depression, in 1932–1933, some 13 million people—one out of every four who had held jobs in 1929—were unemployed. In that age of single-income households and virtually nonexistent welfare programs the real human misery implied by those cold statistics was incalculable. Immigrants by the tens of thousands abandoned the American land of promise and slouched back to their old countries; families went unstarted as pinched budgets and sagging self-esteem wrought a sexual depression in countless American bedrooms; 20 percent of New York City's schoolchildren suffered from malnutrition, educators reported; Oklahoma City and Minneapolis were rocked by hunger riots—while, paradoxically, hillocks of unmarketable grain rotted beside railroad tracks across the Plains states. Many Americans might have trembled for their country in 1933 if they had reflected that lesser crises in other places had toppled governments and given birth to tyrants—like Hitler and Mussolini.

Herbert Hoover, the savior of starving Belgians and the hero of food mobilization in the First World War, a powerful and remarkably progressive Cabinet member throughout the 1920s, and probably the most respected politician in America when he was elected to the presidency, in 1928, proved no man on horseback to rescue his suffering people from the storm that enshrouded them in 1929. Salvation—of sorts—came instead from a man in a wheelchair, Franklin D. Roosevelt.

A dour Hoover clung fast to small-government principles and fumbled

vainly for a voluntarist formula with which to combat the Depression. An irrepressibly buoyant Roosevelt, in contrast, brought with him to Washington in 1933 a restless, young, pragmatic entourage eager to experiment with all kinds of remedies for the crisis—including, especially, vigorous federal-government intervention. The results are legendary. In his first hundred days in office Roosevelt ramrodded through Congress a batch of reforms affecting agriculture, industry, banking, and the development of natural resources. In the following months he boldly inflated the dollar and brought the federal government extensively into the business of providing relief to the unemployed. By the end of Roosevelt's first term his New Deal programs had revolutionized relations between labor and capital, changed the face of the American countryside, and, with the passage of the Social Security Act, in 1935, laid the foundations for the welfare system that would grow to such controversial proportions in the post-Second World War decades. In the process he made the previously provincial Democrats the dominant political party for at least two generations following his first inaugural. Small wonder that even in the supposedly tranquil writing chambers of academia feelings run high about the thirties.

Robert S. McElvaine's *The Great Depression: America, 1929–1941* takes its place on a long shelf of impassioned works about the Depression and the New Deal. With a handful of bitterly anti-Roosevelt exceptions, such as Hoover's own *Memoirs* and Edgar Eugene Robinson's *The Roosevelt Leadership*, the earliest histories of the Depression decade regarded FDR with reverence and

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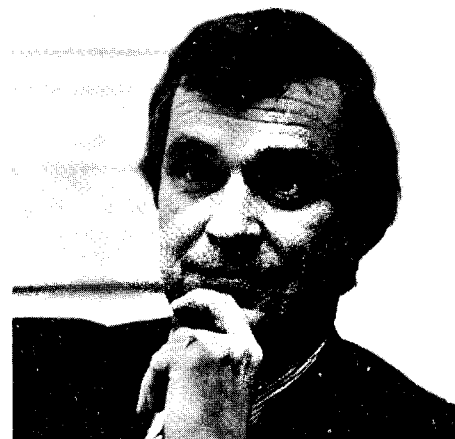
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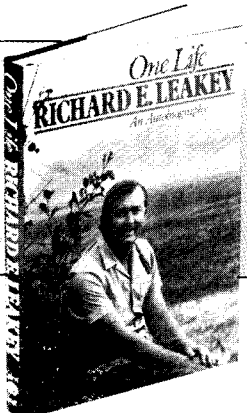
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extravagantly praised the accomplishments of the New Deal. Hoover and Robinson flayed Roosevelt for subverting small-government traditions and for allegedly sapping the vitality of American individualism. But through the early 1960s those cries were drowned in a swelling chorus of pro-New Deal scholarship, which reached its most magisterial note in the three volumes of Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.'s, brilliant and partisan *Age of Roosevelt*.

Schlesinger minimized the Depression as a cause of the New Deal. In keeping with a theory popularized by his historian father, he strongly implied that America in the 1930s had been due for another round in a series of liberal-reform episodes that had alternated regularly with conservative periods throughout American history, regardless of economic conditions. Writing in the 1950s, Schlesinger aimed to protect the New Deal from McCarthyite and conservative-Republican assaults, by securing its historical reputation as part of a long tradition of evolutionary reform, stretching back through progressivism and populism to the anti-slavery movement and the presidencies of Jackson and Jefferson. William Leuchtenburg, in another widely read study, published in 1963, struck a similar note when he described the New Deal as a "halfway revolution," comfortably within the familiar confines of a native American tradition of liberal reform, yet marking a dramatic advance for the good and a turn to the left.

It was precisely this self-satisfied characterization of the New Deal as a moderate extension of a safely domesticated reform tradition on which many radical young scholars of the 1960s gagged. Disillusioned by the failure of an allegedly triumphant liberalism to produce a more just society after more than three decades in the ascendancy, they denounced Roosevelt as a species of political snake-oil salesman who had bamboozled the working class and defanged the potentially revolutionary movement that was supposedly to come out of the economic collapse of the thirties. Barton J. Bernstein provided one of the angriest expressions of this view when he wrote, "The liberal reforms of the New Deal did not transform the American system; they conserved and protected American corporate capitalism. . . . [They were] directed toward essentially conservative goals." The sentiment was akin to that of the Social-

ist leader Norman Thomas, who declared that the New Deal had indeed carried out the Socialist program—on a stretcher.

NOW THE WHEEL of historical fashion has taken yet another turn. Robert S. McElvaine argues that the New Deal, warts and all, is well worth defending, especially when contrasted with what McElvaine regards as the appalling triumph of Reaganite conservatism. Written with the passion of a partisan and the clarity of a cartoonist, *The Great Depression* casts the story of the thirties as a melodrama, pitting the hedonistic, greedy, amoral individualism of the business class against the humanitarian, compassionate (and "feminine") cooperationism of the working class. Roosevelt is portrayed as having been at his worst when heeding, in 1933, the counsel of business-oriented advisers like Raymond Moley, and as at his best, in 1935, when responding to a popular "upsurge of egalitarian-humanitarian values" and "demands for economic morality."

The radical critique of the New Deal that emerged in the 1960s evoked the counterargument that FDR had in fact tested the leftmost limits of an inherently moderate, even conservative, American political culture. McElvaine has now re-opened that debate by carrying the discussion to the level of popular values. He concludes that the New Deal was nothing less than the manifest expression of a major shift in those values and that in fact FDR had considerable room for movement further to the left if he had chosen to go that way.

Unlike Schlesinger, McElvaine assigns the Depression a major role in these developments, because it moved large numbers of the middle class, previously caught up in the "orgy of self-indulgence" of the 1920s, to adopt traditional working-class values "centered on co-operation, sharing, equity, fairness, and justice." This decidedly un-Marxist proletarianization of the bourgeoisie created the political constituency that would demand the sweeping reforms of 1935, including Social Security and Robert Wagner's National Labor Relations Act.

McElvaine finds his evidence for this "fundamental shift in the values of the American people" in the darndest places. He is at his most conventional when he points to the electoral successes of politicians to Roosevelt's left, like Floyd Olson, in Minnesota, Robert

and Philip La Follette, in Wisconsin, and—a more troublesome case—Upton Sinclair, in California (Sinclair won the Democratic gubernatorial primary but lost the general election). He has more difficulty specifying the ideological significance of New Deal critics like Huey Long and Father Charles Coughlin. And McElvaine's argument that workers' letters to FDR abounded in "ethical themes" is weak: many of the passages he quotes express more resentment than reasoned morality. He is at his most dubious in citing films like *Little Caesar*, *I Am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang*, and, believe it or not, *She Done Him Wrong* as proof of widespread value transformations. The style of argument here might give Henry Adams, the father of scientific history in America, a case of sepulchral heebie-jeebies. "All this talk about morality, fairness, equality, humanitarianism, compassion, and moral economics is, admittedly, rather amorphous," McElvaine concedes; "but that is how it is with popular values."

McElvaine makes a heartfelt and ingenious case, but it is not in the end convincing. If the value transformations he cites were so fundamental and diffused, why did the New Deal grind to a halt as a liberal reform movement by 1936? How can his evidence account for the formation of an extremely potent conservative bloc in Congress in Roosevelt's politically disastrous second term? How did the reactionary Eightieth Congress ever get elected in 1946? Or Ronald Reagan in 1980? It is here that the question of what kind of people we are takes on more than a polemical meaning.

We have notoriously been a people deeply conflicted about the very values that McElvaine portrays as so unambiguously victorious in the 1930s. We may believe in equality, but we define it variously as a principle guaranteeing parity of social and economic conditions for all Americans and as a principle guaranteeing equal opportunity to compete with one another for wildly unequal rewards. We may believe in compassion, but we are by no means agreed that government should be the instrumentality of our human feelings. We may believe in fairness, but we tolerated slavery for the first century of our nationhood, and we have yet to muster the courage to overhaul a tax system that codifies a system of economic castes.

Americans still resonate sympathetically to incantations about individualism, and they applaud attacks on gov-

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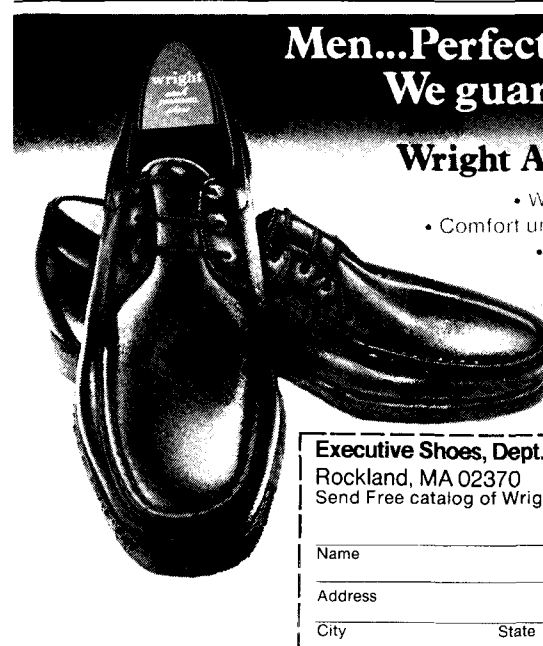
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ernment—even on a democratic government supposedly of, by, and for the people—as the major menace to their liberty. The New Deal may have nicked those ancient American attitudes briefly, but it made no lasting dent in them, despite all the Frank Capra films lapped up by Depression-era audiences. America still stands out among modern nations for the general feebleness of its formal political apparatus and for the lingering cloud of illegitimacy that overhangs all assertions of collectivist ideas. We are still a people in thrall to the small-government, radically individualistic philosophy of Thomas Jefferson. That eighteenth-century philosophy may be obsolete in the late twentieth century, but for better or worse it endures. Not even as forceful an exercise of the historical imagination as McElvaine's can alter that fact of our political life.

McElvaine has perhaps taken too literally Thucydides' advice to treat history as philosophy learned from examples. As a tract in moral and political philosophy, his book is timely and valuable. As history, it recalls Mark Twain's remark that the very ink with which historians write "is merely fluid prejudice." □

THE COMPLEXITIES OF E. M. FORSTER

BY PAUL FUSSELL

SELECTED LETTERS OF E. M. FORSTER, Vol. II (1921–1970)
edited by Mary Lago and P. N. Furbank.
Harvard University Press, \$20.00.

WRITING TO Lionel Trilling in 1955, E. M. Forster exercised his curiosity by speculating playfully but not quite frivolously about the respective social status of the five senses. "I started considering why sight and hearing have more prestige than the others," he said. "Once I had a theory that they were held to be superior because they could be shared with other people: several people can look at the same Grecian Urn, but they cannot swallow the same

Paul Fussell teaches English at the University of Pennsylvania. Among his books is *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars*.

drop of claret. This leaves out poor old smell, though: no sense is morally inferior to smell." That's a sample of the complicated Forster revealed in his letters. Who else would write mock-pityingly of "poor old smell," exhibiting at the same time both a liberal impulse to correct an unfairness and an aristocratic impulse to satirize sentimentality? Not to mention his concern, which surfaces everywhere, with hierarchies of moral superiority.

The first volume of Forster's letters was published last year. It included letters to his mother and to his friends from school and from Cambridge; from his early European—largely Italian—travels; from Nassenheide, in Germany, where he was an English tutor in a family; and from England, where he re-installed himself in 1905, writing a lot to the Indian Syed Ross Masood, an early crush to whom he dedicated *A Passage to India* seventeen years later. He wrote from India during his first visit there, in 1912–1913, to see Masood; and he wrote from Alexandria, where during the Great War he served in the Wounded and Missing Bureau of the Red Cross, trying to ascertain from soldiers in the hospitals what had happened to men listed as "Missing." "The regular and definite work," he wrote Masood from a hospital, "has stopped me thinking about the war, which is a mercy, for in England I very nearly went mad." In Alexandria he was distracted also, by a tender affair with a young streetcar conductor, Mohammed-Adl, whom Forster loved dearly but who died of tuberculosis in 1922.

This second and final volume contains Forster's descriptions of the comedies attending his "secretarial" work for the Maharaja of Dewas, in 1921, and the surprising success of *A Passage to India*, in 1924. He delivered the Clark lectures at Cambridge, which were published as *Aspects of the Novel* (1927). In 1930 he met Bob Buckingham, the policeman who became his lifetime love. Buckingham's marriage, two years later, did little to diminish Forster's interest in him, and it was to the Buckingham's house that, forty years later, he was carried to die. During the thirties he was active in various international writers' organizations opposing totalitarianism and censorship, and after war broke out, he broadcast, largely to India, for the BBC. As a result there are some admirably firm letters abusing the BBC's administrators for their wartime timidity about broadcasting criticism of anything except the enemy. To one acquaintance

distressed by his published sneers at Mrs. Miniver, the great fictive prototype of unimaginative British bravery and privilege, he wrote: "The closing down of criticism, and the division of criticism into 'responsible' and 'illegitimate' are two of the things I am out against, and whose victory would in my judgment hasten the coming of darkness." Asked by a BBC producer to say what he felt about the war, Forster answered: "*What I feel about the war*. I don't want to lose it. . . . I can't join in any 'build-a-new-world' stuff. Once in a lifetime one can swallow that, but not twice."

Freedom opened before him in 1945, when his mother died: she had treated him like a little girl, he said. It was then that he was taken into his old Cambridge college, King's, as a fellow, with a comfortable room and no duties. One of the most exciting jobs in his latter days was helping Benjamin Britten with the libretto of *Billy Budd*, and he also kept his blood circulating by more traveling in India—he was now in his mid-sixties—and in the United States, which he admired for its complex anomalies. He wrote to Buckingham: "Chicago—is—oh well, a façade of skyscrapers facing a lake, and behind the façade every type of dubiousness." In 1961 he corresponded enthusiastically with Santha Rama Rau, whose dramatization of *A Passage to India* was a hit in England and the United States. Before the New York production Forster advised her earnestly about the courtroom scene: "MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL the nude beautiful punkah wallah"—the bottom-caste Indian who moves the fan hanging from the ceiling. In the production at Nottingham, Forster noted, he was "neither beautiful nor nude," with the result that the effect was enfeebled. Forster wrote letters to the last—curious, assertive, affectionate, focusing on "the things that have most interested me in life, . . . personal relationships and the arts."

A MAN OF LETTERS obsessed with Afrienship and who lives into his early nineties is likely to write a lot of letters. Forster wrote some 15,000, and his editors, Mary Lago, an American professor of English, and P. N. Furbank, the author of the excellent standard biography (1977), have had to select severely: they print only 446. One effect of this rigorous selection is to make Forster seem more benign and controlled than he always was. Although the editors do show him on occasion snotty and angry

and childish stubborn, especially with publishers and reactionary Anglo-Indians, they have stopped short of including Forster's bizarre letter of April, 1961, telling his old friend W. J. H. Sprott, whom he had appointed his literary executor, that he was too drunken to do the job responsibly. "Long may you . . . continue to swill," he wrote, but really, being a literary executor requires an undamaged brain. Again, when Forster learned that Bob Buckingham wanted to get married, he threw crazy physical tantrums. The letter to Sprott printed in this selection describes these mildly and abstractly: "When I cannot 'get what I want' I have tempers . . . they are canny & calculating & non-suicidal and I hate them." Much more damaging is another description Forster sent Sprott the same day, which this selection omits, although Furbank included it in his biography: "Attacks take the form of sudden yelps, contortions, pretence fainting-fits, and the hitting of parts of my body that don't hurt against objects in the room that aren't valuable." *Sudden yelps?* From the author of *Howards End* and *Marianne Thornton*?

Sprott was clearly a correspondent to whom Forster could speak frankly. Others were fellow homophiles Joe Ackersley, Christopher Isherwood, and Siegfried Sassoon, although Sassoon began to disappear as a correspondent once he had committed the apostasy of marriage. If Forster could never reveal much of the truth about himself to his mother, he did to another woman, the admirable Florence Barger, his most sympathetic confidant in his Alexandria affair with Mohammed-el-Adl. With his French translator, Charles Lauron, he talked literature; with the Cambridge don Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, love, morals, aesthetics, and that pressing late-Victorian subject, their interrelation. With a cadgy T. E. Lawrence he flirted. He exhorted Constantine Cavafy, in Alexandria, to produce more poems, and George Valassopoulos to translate them, so that Cavafy's work could be properly appreciated in England. He wrote fan letters generously, to Virginia Woolf (of whom usually he was not terribly fond), Robert Bridges, and A. E. Housman, and his motive was not any desire to siddle up to greatness. He often wrote authors quite unknown, like the New Zealand novelist Frank Sargeson: "I would like you to know how much your work interests me." But to Buckingham he could be surprisingly bitchy, rebuking

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him for his hail-fellow superficiality, his hobbyism, and his nervousness about social class. Smitten with jealousy, Forster was not above ridiculing Buckingham's pleasure in rowing, writing once, after his friend had proudly won a trophy, "Was very pleased to see you win your little piss-pot."

Clad in his tacky, nondescript clothes, and emitting his little titter, Forster struck many people as shy and reclusive, but actually his resemblance to a mouse was external only. With all his enthusiasm for Only Connecting and for Love, the Beloved Republic, he was mighty tough, and his principles were unbending, as some of his correspondents learned—like the sahib venturing to wonder about the accuracy of *A Passage to India*, who was told: "I really don't en-

self most decidedly included) a sense of moral uneasiness a lot of the time." So much so that a good moral test of any current action—meddling in Central America, for example—could be, What would Forster think of it? (Try this on school prayer, or snitching on girls who get diaphragms at public expense.)

READERS OF THESE letters may look for answers to some teasing questions. For one: How could a writer of Forster's sensitivity, wit, and clear-sightedness put on so embarrassingly silly and inert a performance as his posthumous homophobic *Maurice*? He imagined that it was unpublishable during his lifetime because of British puritanism. But actually it was unpublishable because it is bad, with its implausible plot, its un-

utterly unironic, and thus utterly humorless, and thus not human. Yet when Forster wrote one friend that two others agreed that "it is beautiful and the best work I have done," he did not demur. He told T. E. Lawrence, who had begged off reading the manuscript, that he should be acquainted with Forster's homoerotic writings "if you want to sum me up." Alas, too true. His blindness about *Maurice* indicates that even so sensitive an artist was not immune to thematic adhesions capable of travestying his art. "An intensely self-critical man," his editors call him. Not always, as the letters make touchingly clear.

Another question readers may hope these letters will answer: Why, after *A Passage to India*, did Forster publish no more novels? He was at the height of success, celebrated everywhere, poised for a career as a novelist to equal or surpass Woolf's, Conrad's, even Hardy's. Yet he quit, and for his remaining forty-six years turned out radio talks, essays, reviews, family memoirs, travel pieces, family biography, a local pageant—and coy, "unpublishable" short stories. Even while at work on *A Passage to India*, in 1923, he sensed that he had reached some sort of turning point. To Sassoon he wrote, "I shall never write another novel after it," and offered as a reason: "My patience with ordinary people has given out." But in 1966, when the American scholar Wilfred Stone, the author of a critical study of Forster, wondered about the matter, Forster answered: "I have been racking my brains and can find no reply to this very reasonable question. I can only suggest that the fictional part of me dried up." Perhaps the truth is that the more respectable fictional part dried up and the "romance" urge took over, daydream ousting the world of presentable social data. While remaining tough-minded about politics, war, coercion, censorship, stupidity, and other facts of the real world, imaginatively he hankered increasingly for the greenwood. In his dreams the nude beautiful punkah wallah of pastoral and romance finally displaced the Adela Questeds and Cyril Fieldings of the novel. In Forster's vulnerability to that sort of fantasizing there's something moving, and something that positions him near the center of the Edwardian and Georgian secret "aesthetic" culture. In our own day of frankness, not to say exhibitionism, it can hardly be understood. These letters help. □



dorse anything you say in your letter!" Or the secretary of P.E.N., which had innocently allied itself with a cunning travel agent's scheme to convey groups of the faithful to Skyros for the unveiling of a monument to Rupert Brooke. "I regret," Forster wrote him, "that I must terminate my connection with the P.E.N." Its crime had been to publicize, a little, the travel agent's cruise, which "appears to be a purely commercial undertaking, aggravated by every circumstance of bad taste." At one point he informed Gerald Brenan that "booksellers are dishonest" and publishers largely morons: "It is my fate and perhaps my temperament to sign agreements with fools." To Sassoon he wrote, "Dear me, one doesn't like many people." You'd have to go far to find someone morally more critical than Forster. "He was deceptively cozy," Stephen Spender remembers, "but gave many people (my-

real motivations, and its melodramatic, distorted vision of the actual social world. Forster knew perfectly well, and asserted often at international conferences, that there's no necessary connection between social justice and art, that art must freely construct its shapes regardless of social and political consequences. Yet he desired so fervently a redeemed world that would "understand" homosexuals, he was so besotted with fantasies of ideal friendships, in which faithful male lovers lived ecstatically in the perpetual "greenwood," that with *Maurice* he allowed his critical faculties to slumber and produced the sort of propaganda that normally he scorned. Nowhere visible in the work is the irony attending Forster's notion of "poor old smell," not to mention *A Passage to India*, where he perceived that human hopes are bound to turn out badly because they are human hopes. *Maurice* is

RELUCTANT REVOLUTIONARIES

BY MARK STEVENS

DEGAS: HIS LIFE, TIMES, AND
WORK

by Roy McMullen.
Houghton Mifflin, \$24.50.

MATISSE
by Pierre Schneider.
Rizzoli, \$95.00.

THE CONVENTIONAL portrait of a modern artist—the artist of the last hundred years—is easy to draw. He is a bohemian who behaves outrageously or a secular saint who, in making his mark, suffers abuse from the world. He is impotent or he is Don Juan. He is more interested (until recently) in form than content; he always “makes it new.” He is a genius, of course. Conventions of this kind, though entertaining, cheapen art. They make an idol of the artist and a melodrama of creation. Still worse, they turn art into something not quite itself, something streamlined for use by show-biz, art history, the museum.

These two books present a more complex picture of the making of a modernist. Neither Degas nor Matisse had a bohemian temperament. (Anything but, in the case of Degas.) Neither made an early splash. Each, revering the work of the past, was a reluctant revolutionary. For both, the principal drama was the struggle in the studio. In Roy McMullen's fine biography of Degas, the man is not larger than life but “gifted, attractive and often disagreeably complicated.” In Pierre Schneider's *Matisse*, an important and beautiful book, the art never seems smaller than life. For Schneider, Matisse is more than a brilliant brush, more too than an occasion for art history. He is nothing less than a great religious artist.

Degas (1834–1917) started slowly. Born into the French *grande bourgeoisie*, he took lessons from conservative teachers; among painters he revered “Monsieur Ingres” above all. He liked to tell friends, “I once held Ingres in my arms”—referring to an incident when the elderly master had fainted in his presence. He made numerous copies of

works in the Louvre and, like a proper young artist, studied in Italy. Even as a young man, however, he displayed the “ironic intelligence and veiled morosity” characteristic of one for whom very good is not good enough. Friends in Italy referred, affectionately, to the “Degas who grumbles” and the “Edgar who growls.” He himself worried about his detachment. “The heart is an instrument that rusts if it is not used,” he wrote. “Without a heart can one be an artist?”

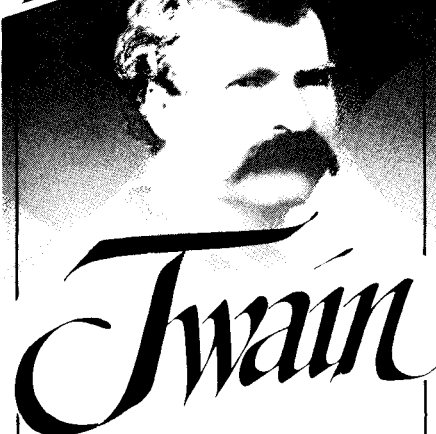
Once, reduced to tears before the early Renaissance frescoes in Assisi, he thought of becoming a monk. “Ah, these people had a feeling for life, for life,” he wrote. “They never rejected it. . . . If I am not a religious painter, at least let me feel as they felt.” In Paris, however, he soon adopted the rather artificial role of a member of his class. He was a friend of poor Impressionists, to be sure, but in other ways was a gentleman of the old school. He attended the theater, the ballet, and musical events. He developed a reputation as a scourge of fakes and a purveyor of amusing abuse. He particularly loathed the fashionable world of the arts, a milieu that McMullen evokes well. Degas complained of the endless “tittle-tattle,” the corrupting desire for fame, the collectors who regarded art as an investment, the eternal meanspirited critics. The muses do not discuss art after work, Degas said; they dance.

With age Degas soured into dignity. He was “ready at any moment to stop, settle back on his heels and cane, and then, as remembered by the critic Arsène Alexandre, ‘examine things and people with a sort of recoil of the bust and a bridling up of the head.’” He indulged in the operatic patriotism of his class during the Dreyfus affair, thereby destroying his relationship with his oldest friend, who was Jewish. McMullen makes a good case that Degas, who never married, was not a homosexual. Whether he was impotent, as McMullen believes, is less certain than that he found it necessary to remain alone.

In his painting Degas did not play the role of *grand bourgeois*. When young, he kept to the fringes of the official art world. He idolized Gustave Moreau (a teacher also important to Matisse), who opened his eyes to more-romantic art; he learned to appreciate Delacroix's color as well as Ingres's line. Most significant of all, he could not complete to his satisfaction grand historical paintings of the kind preferred at the official Salon. No

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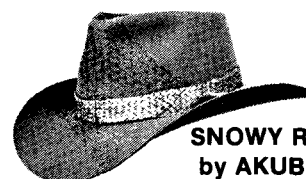
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Mark Stevens is an art critic for Newsweek. His first novel, *Summer in the City*, was published last year.

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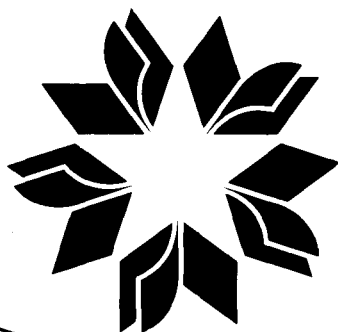
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doubt there are many reasons for this, but perhaps the most elemental was that in his art Degas could not tell lies—and history-painting had become by then a big shiny machine, theatrical and empty.

Degas retained a stage in his work, but one more suited to the private man. He portrayed, in his famous pictures of the ballet, the cropped, jerky, staccato theater typical of modern life. He looked for the freshly canted perspective or the unexpected moment, for the ephemeral and living rather than the eternal and dead. He savored the backstage feeling: the sawing of a violin bow, the jerk of a bicep, the scrape of a slipper. In Degas you rarely savor the supreme grace of a pas de deux; you see the awkward grace of flesh straining for art. In the artificial glow of gaslights—a shimmering smear of pastel—the girls strut and work.

Degas mostly portrayed women, such as "*les petits rats*" in the dancing class (many of them mistresses of bourgeois dandies) or ordinary women washing, ironing, and combing. What could be more unlike the dressed-up ladies of fashion than his earthy women in tubs? As McMullen says, Degas was a kind of voyeur, but there is something touching in the distant intimacy of his work. His contemporaries, accustomed to idealized nudes and ballerinas, often found him cruel. If he was, his was an exquisitely tender cruelty—a refined peeling back, to reveal something importantly, refreshingly raw. Asked once why he accompanied rich ladies to dress shops, the solitary bachelor, the unsentimental painter, the *grand bourgeois*, said, "It's the red hands of the little girl who holds the pins."

IF MCMULLEN PORTRAYS a man, Schneider delineates a mind. The facts of Matisse's life (1869–1954), except those that directly pertain to his art, are in a brief appendix; a reader will learn little about the artist's childhood, sexual tastes, or public face—though his conflict-ridden personality is often mentioned. This approach is useful. Thanks partly to well-known photographs of the elderly artist, Matisse the man has become a delightful prop: a cuddly papa surrounded by doves, nudes, and colorful arabesques. Matisse the artist has, in turn, become the great formalist, the liberator of color. Critics, when reading Matisse's more spiritual musings, are thus inclined to think, "Yes, yes—but look at the play of the brush. The color!



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Schneider recalls us to the abiding importance of the mind behind the brush, restoring to prominence the deep intelligence and the spiritual passion of the artist. He takes seriously Matisse's stated desire to create an art that reflects "my almost religious awe before life." Matisse's painting may be rich, physical, and pleasure-loving, but it is not trivially so. As Schneider suggests, Matisse was serious about paradise much as Islamic artists are. There are, besides, many darker and less successful notes in his work, which was mostly a struggle toward paradise. He did not take shortcuts by borrowing old approaches to Eden, nor did he indulge in the sentimental hankering of many Europeans for the exotic. Matisse used the means of modern art and thought. Through simplification of line and color, through two-dimensional space and abstracted form, through the very reduction that led other modernists to a limiting formalism, Matisse found his way to the sacred.

Schneider's book is a chart of tireless explorations, breakthroughs, revisions, doubts, and, finally, triumphant success. The author has analyzed the many influences on Matisse and has not stinted on iconographic or philosophical discussion. Three general points can suggest some idea of the book's tone and scope.

First, Matisse had a deeply divided sensibility, despite his apparent ease. Like Degas, he schooled himself in widely different outlooks, from the sturdy realism of Dutch still life to the retinal quickness of Impressionism to the moody transcendence of Moreau. Through most of his life Matisse's painting seesawed between the three-dimensional (European still life) and the two-dimensional (decorative and oriental fabric). Frequently he included both in one painting. He was also divided between the demands of realistic, tonal color and those of abstract decorative color. The competing claims of color and line tormented him. Far from hurting his painting, this tension gave his art some grittiness.

Second, his iconography matters. Schneider meticulously analyzes the varied import of windows, nudes, oriental carpets, studios, plants, still lifes. The goldfish bowl, a minor motif, nicely suggests the artist's gift for serious play. Goldfish attracted Matisse partly because, in Schneider's words, "they are

eminently suited to the language of pure color," as opposed to the tonal values of realism. The fish are "objects of contemplation" and "living reflections of the Golden Age," when contemplation was the essential activity and men did not feel the need to be responsible and observant—"conscious, interested, grasping, historical."

Matisse, "obsessed by transparency," loved the idea of breaking free of material space into a "space in which there were no walls, just as there are none for the fish in the sea." The glass bowl, Schneider says, "would cease to be depicted when the entire work became a radiance of forms and colors expanding in a limitless space of absolute transparency." This would come when Matisse, at the end of his life, freed himself from

sional sense of space, and the primordial imagery of the dance. Schneider quotes Zarathustra: "I should believe only in a God who understood how to dance."

Matisse decorated the chapel in Vence, but his sense of the sacred remained more Oriental than Christian. In Islamic art, for example, Matisse found a decorative impulse akin to his own—that is, one deepened by the sacred repetitions of Islam, which suggest the logic, luxury, and boundlessness of paradise. In turn, the memory of Oceania (he visited Tahiti in 1930) gave him a feeling for an actual, rather than imaginary, world without boundaries—leafy, and full of air and water and light. "When you draw a tree," he said, quoting a Chinese master, "you must feel yourself gradually growing with it." He



realistic space and made his great cutouts. Until then the goldfish bowl evoked both three and two dimensions, both the Occident and the Orient.

Third, Matisse found his paradise only sporadically. This is hardly surprising, given his attraction to realism—to say nothing of the grisly, secular character of the twentieth century. His first great "sacred" works stem from his Fauvist outburst in 1904. For many vanguard artists, the breakdown of painting to its essentials, to just paint and canvas, had led to a materialist and secular art. For Matisse, the liberation of color from mere description, undertaken by the Fauves, freed him momentarily from realism. Because realism is unsuited to religious ends (it stresses this world), Matisse could use color for a more spiritual purpose. In *La Danse* (1910)—a picture fierce with happiness—he brought together pure, radiant color, a two-dimen-

continued to draw from life, but with the hope of realizing, through long observation, something greater than the just copy. His line no longer described a woman; it caught her spirit on the wing.

In the cutouts Matisse finally gave himself up to the decorative. He resolved the separation he felt between line and color. Using scissors to "draw in color," he sent his work up and away from the easel. It became simple and luminous; it defined a spiritual space. Schneider writes that "from 1950 on, Matisse's space has the fragile, radiant nakedness of what is newly born and utterly alone." A friend called Matisse a "hewer of light." Matisse, asking himself if he believed in God, answered, "Yes, when I work."

Matisse hoped to recover the lost communion between artists and the public. Resisting the contraction toward the private and idiosyncratic, to which

Degas contributed, he once again sought the more universal in art. He refused to settle for brilliant fragments. Did he succeed in his religious aims? Of course not. In a secular society without a religious purpose no artist can succeed as the great religious artists of traditional cultures did. He will always remain an artist with spiritual aspirations, rather than the shared instrument of the community. But the aspiration counts. To make, without cheating, something that is at once modern and transcendent—nothing is more difficult today. Nothing has the same poignance. “The gods are departing from modern painting,” Degas said. Matisse lured them back, for a moment.

In tracing Matisse’s development Schneider has written many penetrating asides on other painters, styles, writers, and cultures. For example, he makes a connection between Proust and the Impressionists, and presents the philosophy behind Islamic art. He is not a concise writer; his pen tends to run away with him during the rush of an idea. Too often he repeats the same quotations in different contexts, and he shows a weak-

ness for trite metaphors and purple prose. Matisse scholars may decide that he presumes too much about Matisse’s thinking; sometimes he may push his own interests on the artist a little too forcefully. Any such faults seem minor. This book, clearly a labor of love, does not diminish the rich and subtle evolution of a great artist’s mind. Few books can claim as much.

Perhaps Schneider’s monograph will lead art historians to discuss the kinds of meaning that cannot easily be described. Art is full of them. (Matisse himself liked the dictum “That which can be learned is not worth teaching.”) Both books should help restore subject matter as an important, if not decisive, player in the meaning of a work of art. They should also help remove the slick shine that surrounds great artists. Neither Matisse nor Degas, it should be clear, was a romantic figure. Each studied, worked, and thought seriously. Each was willing, alone in the studio, to ask devilishly hard questions of himself and his talent. In neither does genius seem to have been a gift. Great art looks given, but it is usually earned. □

in the world’s most arid region, freeze in the earth’s furnace and overeat in a land which could hardly produce a bean or lettuce leaf.” Why, one asks, did the French want the place? Mr. Porch maintains that as a nation they did not want it. It was wanted only by army officers suffering in remote outposts from a mixture of personal ambition and chronic boredom. Thanks to the unsupervisable bushwhacking of these fellows, “The French empire was acquired in an orgy of military indiscipline.” The details of that orgy were generally disgraceful, but they make a lively, if bloody, history, which Mr. Porch relates with sardonic gusto.

IVY by Hilary Spurling. Knopf, \$22.95. Ivy Compton-Burnett (1884–1969) was a novelist and, insofar as Ms. Spurling has been able to discover, only a novelist. She did not leave a mass of journals, diaries, or letters; she seldom traveled very far from London; she did not join clubs or promote causes. She just sat at home and wrote. That sort of industry is hard on the practitioner’s subsequent biographer. Ms. Spurling is necessarily driven to the hypothetical reconstruction of a largely interior life from clues in her subject’s published fiction, and deserves credit for making intelligent, reasonable use of what she has to go on. She also takes full advantage of Compton-Burnett’s one nonliterary occupation, which was collecting a large number of eccentric and waspishly articulate friends, whose doings provide the reader with considerable amusement.

SWALLOW by D. M. Thomas. Viking, \$16.95. The relationship between life and art, the origins of inspiration, the value, if any, of borrowings from previous artists, are matters not beyond all conjecture, but the author who chooses to base a novel on his gropings in this misty area risks befogging both himself and the reader, which is precisely what Mr. Thomas has done. There are effective scenes in his latest novel, but the total effect is patchwork—a tacking together of bits and pieces left over from other enterprises.

WITH HEMINGWAY by Arnold Samuelson. Random House, \$16.95. In 1934 the late Arnold Samuelson hitchhiked to Key West and presented himself, as a humble twenty-two-year-old admirer and would-be author, on the doorstep of Ernest Hemingway. He was, to his amazement, quickly enlisted as a combination pupil-

BRIEF REVIEWS



POSTSCRIPT TO THE NAME OF THE ROSE by Umberto Eco. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$8.95. “A title,” according to Mr. Eco, “must muddle the reader’s ideas, not regiment them.” His terse account of how he came to call his successful novel *The Name of the Rose*, and how he came to write a novel in the first place, is full of canny insights on the nature of fiction, the management of historical detail, and the practical problems confronting an author who wishes to make a remote time, a non-existent place, and a group of imaginary people seem real to his audience, but in the end it is mischievously like his title. It does nothing to regiment the reader’s ideas.

GEORGE SEGAL by Sam Hunter and Don Hawthorne. Rizzoli, \$75.00. George Segal’s sculptures—those aggressively ordinary people in ghostly white or arbitrarily colorful plaster who lean through real doorways, loll in real chairs, or, in bronze, loiter on real streets—have an undeniable

power to evoke sympathy and stir the imagination. They can also arouse hostility, and one of the most interesting sections of this highly interesting book on Segal’s artistic purposes and unique methods is devoted to his troubles with commissions for public sculpture. Our ancestors were not altogether foolish in their attachment to drooping angels and generals on prancing steeds.

MURDER AT THE BIG STORE by Diane Mayo. St. Martin’s, \$5.95. Although Ms. Mayo’s technique obviously derives from Edward Gorey, the subject of her maliciously funny novel-in-pictures is distinctly her own and will delight anyone who has ever attempted to get a small error rectified by a large department store.

THE CONQUEST OF THE SAHARA by Douglas Porch. Knopf, \$18.95. In the late nineteenth century France undertook to obtain and control the Sahara, where, according to Mr. Porch, “You might drown

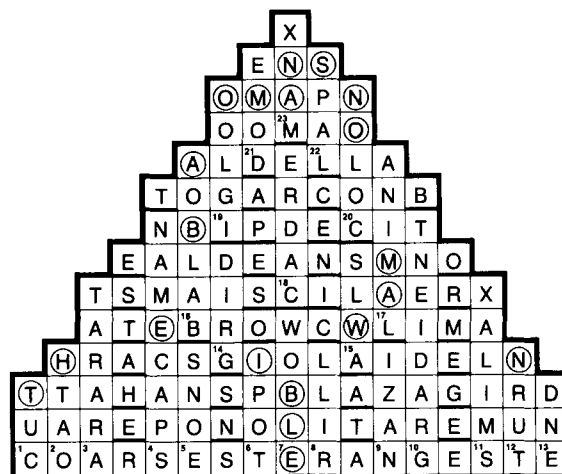
handyman-kid brother, and spent months fishing off Cuba with Hemingway the sportsman and listening to the excellent advice of Hemingway the writer. He kept a record of his adventures but never published it, perhaps out of delicacy, perhaps because the imitation-Hemingway style (almost inevitable under the circumstances) proved impossible to alter. As it now appears, with some editing by Samuelson's daughter, the memoir provides a fine view of Hemingway as kindly teacher, generous host, worried fishing guide, reckless (and unsuccessful) whaler, and occasional s.o.b. The book is well worth reading.

FROM THE BALLETS RUSSES TO VOGUE by Claude Lepape and Thierry Deffert. *Vendome*, \$50.00. Georges Lepape (1887–1971) was one of the most brilliant—possibly the one most brilliant—of the artists who painted *Vogue* covers in the days when a *Vogue* cover was expected to be a work of art, style, and wit. Before his connection with *Vogue*, however, Lepape had illustrated fashions for the innovative couturier Paul Poiret and for several French magazines, and during his long life he also created stage costumes, book illustrations, posters, advertisements, and interior decorations. Two world wars and the Great Depression made no visible impression on his style, which retained to the end the lightness, the elegance, and the hint of amiable irony that had distinguished it at the beginning. The handsome presentation of Lepape's work prepared by his son Claude and Mr. Deffert has only one defect: it brings on a terrible fit of nostalgia. Those, my dear, were clothes!

PRINCE OF CATS by Arjan Singh. *Merri-mack Publisher's Circle*, \$15.95. Mr. Singh has devoted himself and his farm to nurturing orphaned leopards in hopes of returning them to a successful life in the wild. The available wild lies on the Indian–Nepalese border, with disapproving Indian farmers on one side and Nepalese fur poachers on the other. It also abuts a railroad, and how does one explain trains to a leopard? Mr. Singh describes his problems with spirit and his leopards with touching affection. Already responsible for conservation work on behalf of the tiger, Mr. Singh is—there is no other word for it—queer for big cats, and after meeting his leopards the reader is quite likely to share his enthusiasm. His nerve is another matter.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

Answers to the December Puzzler, "MOUNTAIN CLIMBING"



The 20 letters (circled in the diagram) spell The Abominable Snowman.

Across. a. COARSE (homophone) b. ST(RANGE)ST c. ENUMERATION (anag.) d. OPERA (anag.) e. UTAHANS (anag.) f. PLA-Z-A (*alp* rev.) g. GIRD(L)E (anag. + L) h. DIALOGS (anag.) i. CAR(A)T j. BROW(n) k. CLIM(b)-AX l. RE(L)IC (anag. + l) m. SIAM (hidden) n. STEAL (anag.) o. DEANS (anag.) p. NOTICED q. PINTO (anag.) r. GARC-ON (rev.) s. B(ALL)ED t. LOOM (first letters) u. APE-X Up. 1. CU-T 2. OAT-H (anag. + h) 3. ARARAT (hidden) 4. SP(ACEM)AN (*came* anag.) 5. EONS (anag.) 6. TOP-I 7. EL-BOW 8. R-ILL 9. NA(Z)I (anag. + z) 10. GRADIENT (anag.) 11. SMILA-X (anag. + x) 12. TUR-N (*rut* rev.) 13. END (hidden) 14. GRID (anag. minus e) 15. AW(L)S (anag. + l) 16. B(ALB)OA 17. L-AMINA (*anima* rev.) 18. CADRE (anag.) 19. I-GLOO(m) 20. COL-ON 21. DO-ME 22. LAPS(e) 23. MA(N)X

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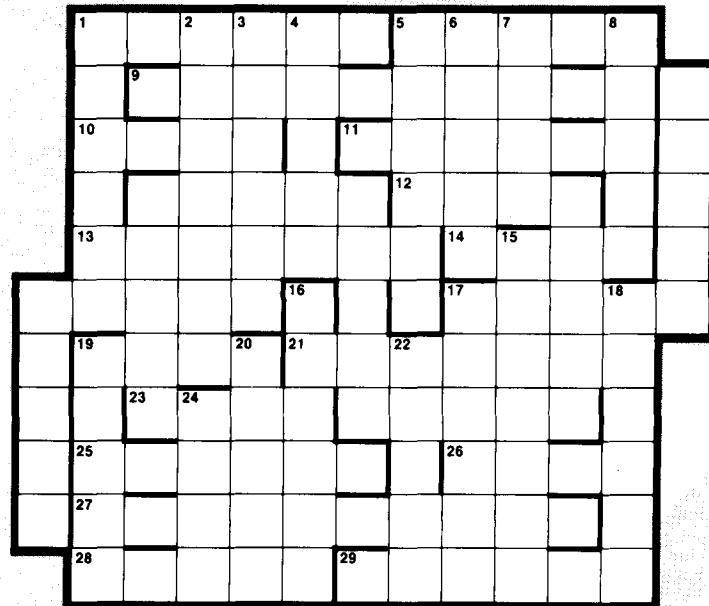
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THE ATLANTIC PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

LADDERGRAM

A laddergram is a form of wordplay in which one word is gradually transformed into another by a series of one-letter changes. For example, RICH can be changed into POOR in this laddergram of six steps: RICH-RICK-ROCK-ROOK-BOOK-BOOR-POOR. This month's diagram contains nine unclued five-letter words that form a laddergram. The two ends of the laddergram are the protrusions at the lower left and upper right. In the grid each laddergram word is crossed by the two words adjacent to it in the laddergram sequence. (Thus any pair of crossing laddergram words will be identical but for one letter.) The words at the extremes of the laddergram are antonyms. Answers to clues include four proper nouns.



The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 101.

ACROSS

1. Rebel blamed for a mob scene (6)
5. Buoyant refugees finally returning to Mideast country (5)
9. Inside closed utensils, notices fungal growths (10)
10. Sulfur fumes receding to sinks (4)
11. Ooze charm in speaking, to boot (6)
12. Drifting free could be a hazard for ships (4)
13. Scholarly merit in Latin edition (7)
14. Large number killed (4)
19. America takes lead from Russian bear in space (4)
21. Book supplements and article about Ike (7)

23. Make music with wrong guitar string (4)
25. Steal rod coated with brass (6)
26. Room for most of string (4)
27. Rise, accepting welfare for youth (10)
28. Group having no basketball equipment (5)
29. Opposing bridges over Susquehanna (6)

DOWN

1. Bee perched on a mineral rock (6)
2. Make watch parts with folded corners (7) (*hyphenated*)
3. Space weapons deadbeats discussed (6)

4. Straighten and/or decorate (5)
5. Solid research about Central America (6)
6. Sure about fine bonds (5)
7. Recited list of names, in part (4)
8. Question we turned to one side (5)
15. Trees died, wrapped in sheets (7)
16. Ate leg after stewing bird (6)
17. Swordsman in *Swamp Lord* auditioned (6)
18. Cowboys' home, turning left in greenery? (6)
19. City headwear for Indians has no top (5)
20. Old England's point of view (5)
22. Italian leader catches enemy's foremost two (5)
24. Press club (4)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 8 Arlington Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

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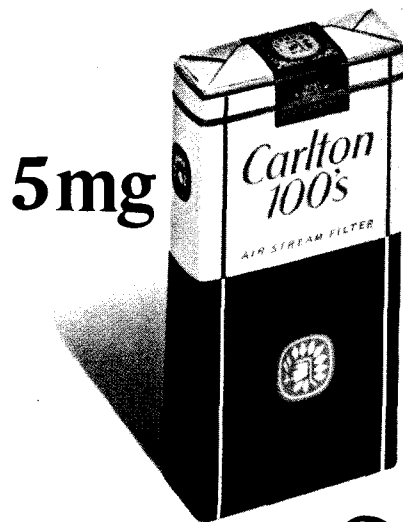
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